



THE INVISIBLE MONSTER

STORIES FROM NAHALI FOLKLORE





The route to your roots
Founder Editor: Anant Pai

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CONTENTS

1	THE INVISIBLE MONSTER Script: Kayva Gokhale Art: Arijit Dutta Chowdhury Colour: Prakash Sivan	3
2	SMELLY LILY Script: Komal Narwani Art: Durgesh Velhal Colour: Sachin Adhare	11
3	THE CROCODILE AND THE FOX Script: Kayva Gokhale Art: Arijit Dutta Chowdhury Colour: Periasamy Samikannu	18
4	THE CARELESS CHILDREN Script: Krithika Nair Art: Vineet Nair Colour: Akshay Khadilkar	22
5	AN UNLIKELY TRADE Script: Kayva Gokhale Art: Mohandas Colour: Tithee Dixit	29
6	MORE CRABS FOR AATI Script: Komal Narwani Art and colour: Sonal Goyal	35

THE INVISIBLE MONSTER

ONCE UPON A TIME, IN A SMALL VILLAGE, THERE LIVED AN OLD WIDOWER AND HIS SON.

FATHER, HOW LONG WILL YOU TOIL IN THE FIELDS WITH ME? YOU MUST TAKE CARE OF YOUR HEALTH NOW.

SON, IF I STOP WORKING, HOW WILL WE MAKE ENDS MEET?

WE WORK SO HARD YET WE REMAIN POOR. LET US SEEK OUR FORTUNE SOMEPLACE ELSE.

I AGREE. I CANNOT THINK OF LEAVING OUR HOME, BUT WE HAVE NO CHOICE.

SO, THE NEXT DAY, THE OLD MAN AND HIS SON TOOK WHATEVER THEY HAD SAVED AND SET OUT ON THEIR JOURNEY.

THEY TRAVELLED A GREAT DISTANCE FROM THEIR HOME, CROSSING MOUNTAINS...

...DESERTS...

...AND RIVERS...

...UNTIL THEY ENTERED A LUSH, GREEN FOREST.

IT'S SO BEAUTIFUL! OH, I COULD LIVE HERE FOREVER.

IF ONLY WE COULD FIND SOMETHING TO EAT. I'M STARVING!

AS THEY EXPLORED THE FOREST —

LOOK, FATHER! THERE IS SMOKE RISING IN THE DISTANCE. WE MAY GET SOME FOOD THERE.

LET US GO AND FIND OUT.

WOW! WHAT A FANCY-LOOKING MANSION!



THEY BOTH REACHED THE KITCHEN IN SEARCH OF FOOD, BUT —

**THUMP
THUMP**

WHAT'S THAT NOISE?

SOUNDS LIKE THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE IS BACK. QUICK, LET'S HIDE IN THE CELLAR!



THE HOUSE BELONGED TO THE MONSTER OF THE FOREST.

I'M STARVING AFTER MY LONG WALK! LET ME COOK SOME TASTY DISHES.



♪ HMMM HMMM ♪

WHATEVER HE IS COOKING SMELLS DELICIOUS!

OH MY, THAT MONSTER LOOKS SO SCARY!



THE DELICIOUS FRAGRANCE OF THE FOOD DROVE THE YOUNG MAN CRAZY WITH HUNGER.



THE MONSTER WAS SCARY BUT HE WAS NOT VERY SMART.

WANT TO EAT!
WANT TO EAT!

OH DEAR,
THERE IS ANOTHER
MONSTER IN THIS
HOUSE! HE WANTS
TO EAT ME!



TERRIFIED, THE MONSTER RAN TO HIS FRIEND, THE BEAR.



THE BEAR AND THE MONSTER STARTED THEIR SEARCH.

THE ONLY ROOM WE HAVEN'T SEARCHED IS THE CELLAR. LET'S SEE IF ANYONE IS HIDING IN THERE.

BEAR, DON'T GO INSIDE! WHAT IF THE MONSTER ATTACKS YOU?

NOW, THIS WAS A TIME WHEN BEARS HAD LONG AND BUSHY TAILS.



OKAY, I'LL JUST SLIP MY TAIL THROUGH THE TRAPDOOR AND FEEL AROUND.

YUCK! WHAT A STINKY TAIL THIS IS!

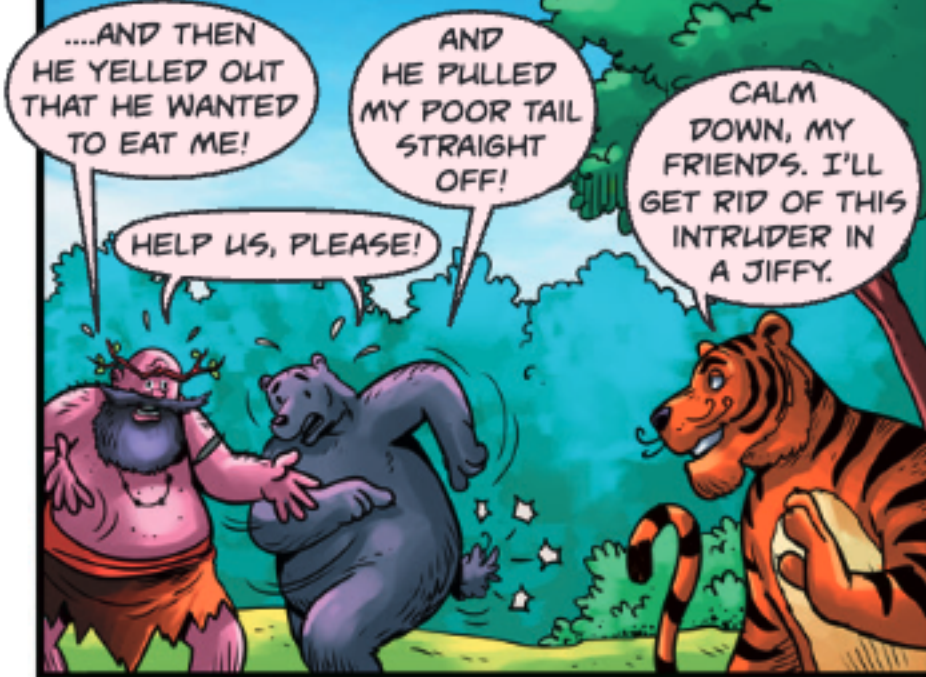
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

TEACHING THIS SMELLY BEAR A LESSON!



MEANWHILE, DEEP IN THE FOREST, THE MONSTER AND THE BEAR TOLD THEIR STORY TO THE TIGER.

THE THREE FRIENDS SEARCHED THE WHOLE HOUSE, BUT COULD NOT FIND ANYONE.





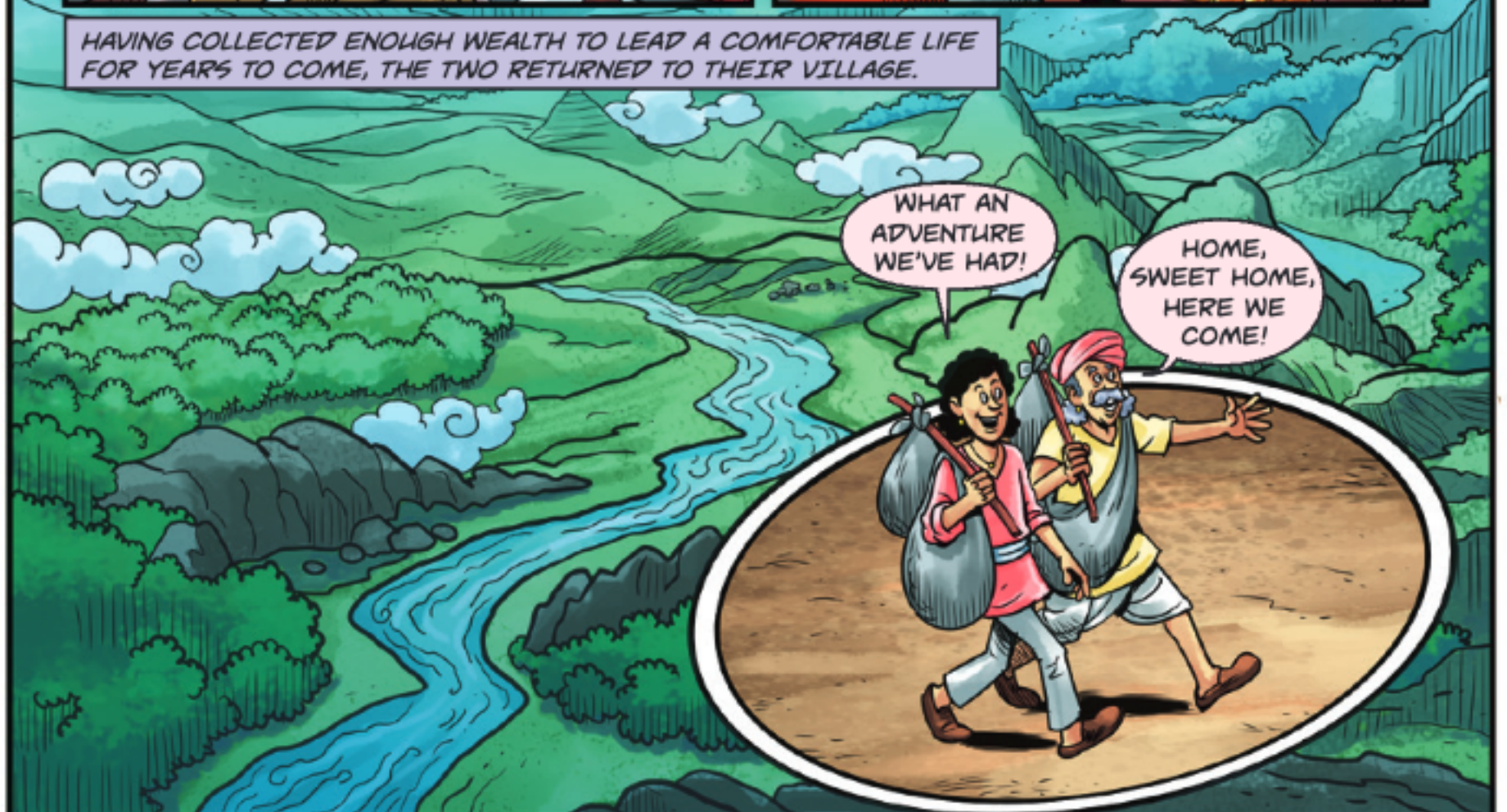
BOTH THE MEN WENT BACK TO THE MANSION.



AFTER EATING THEIR FILL, THEY EXPLORED THE HOUSE.

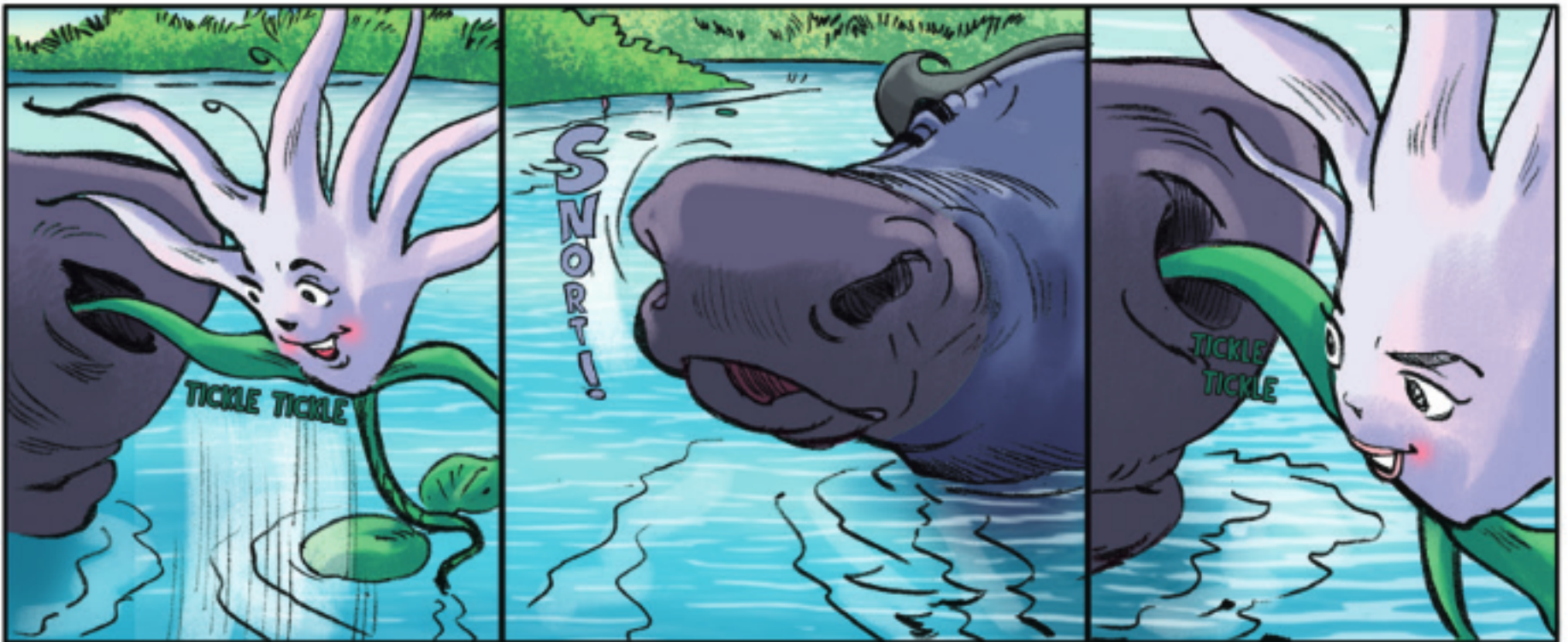
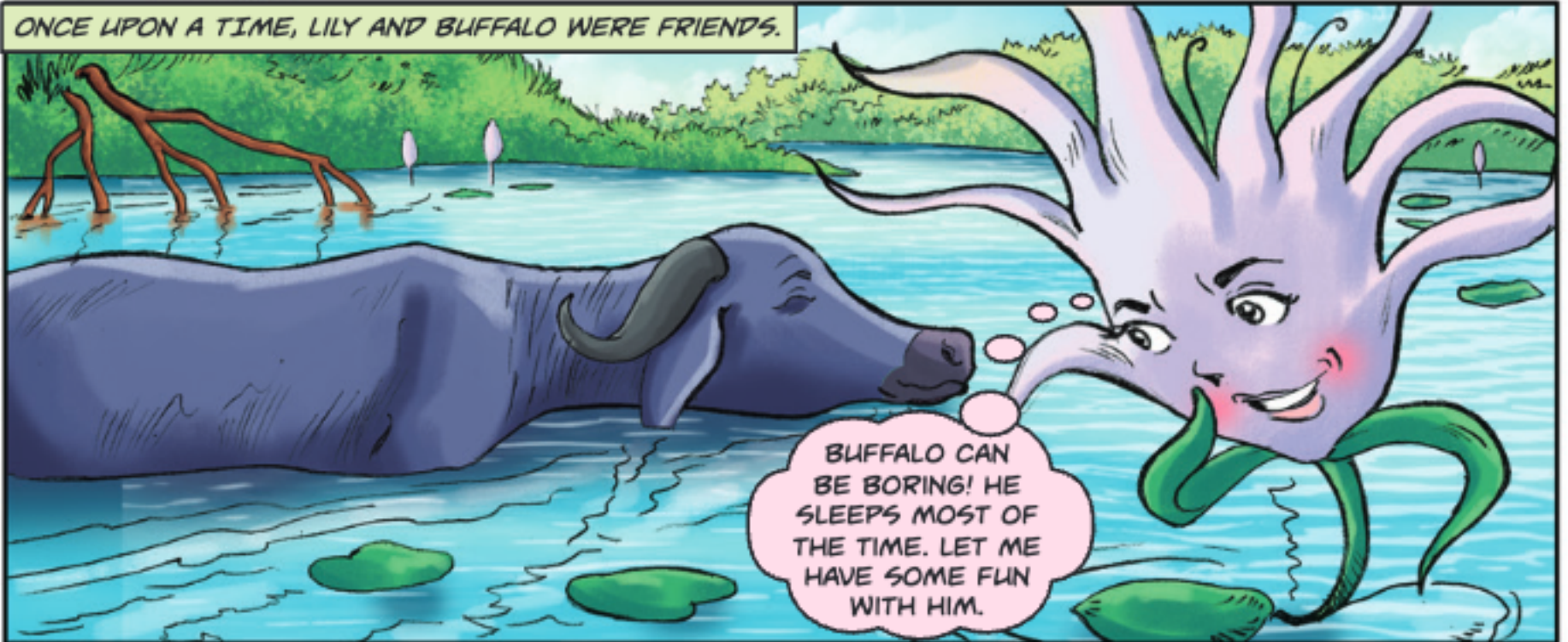


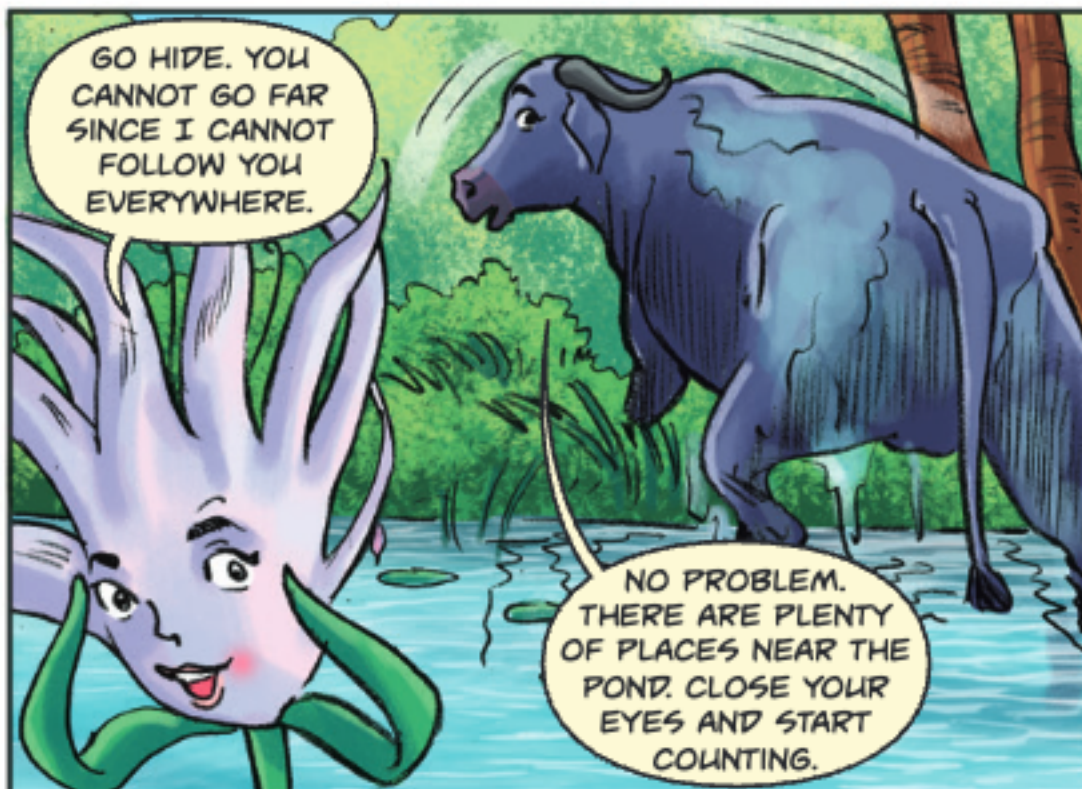
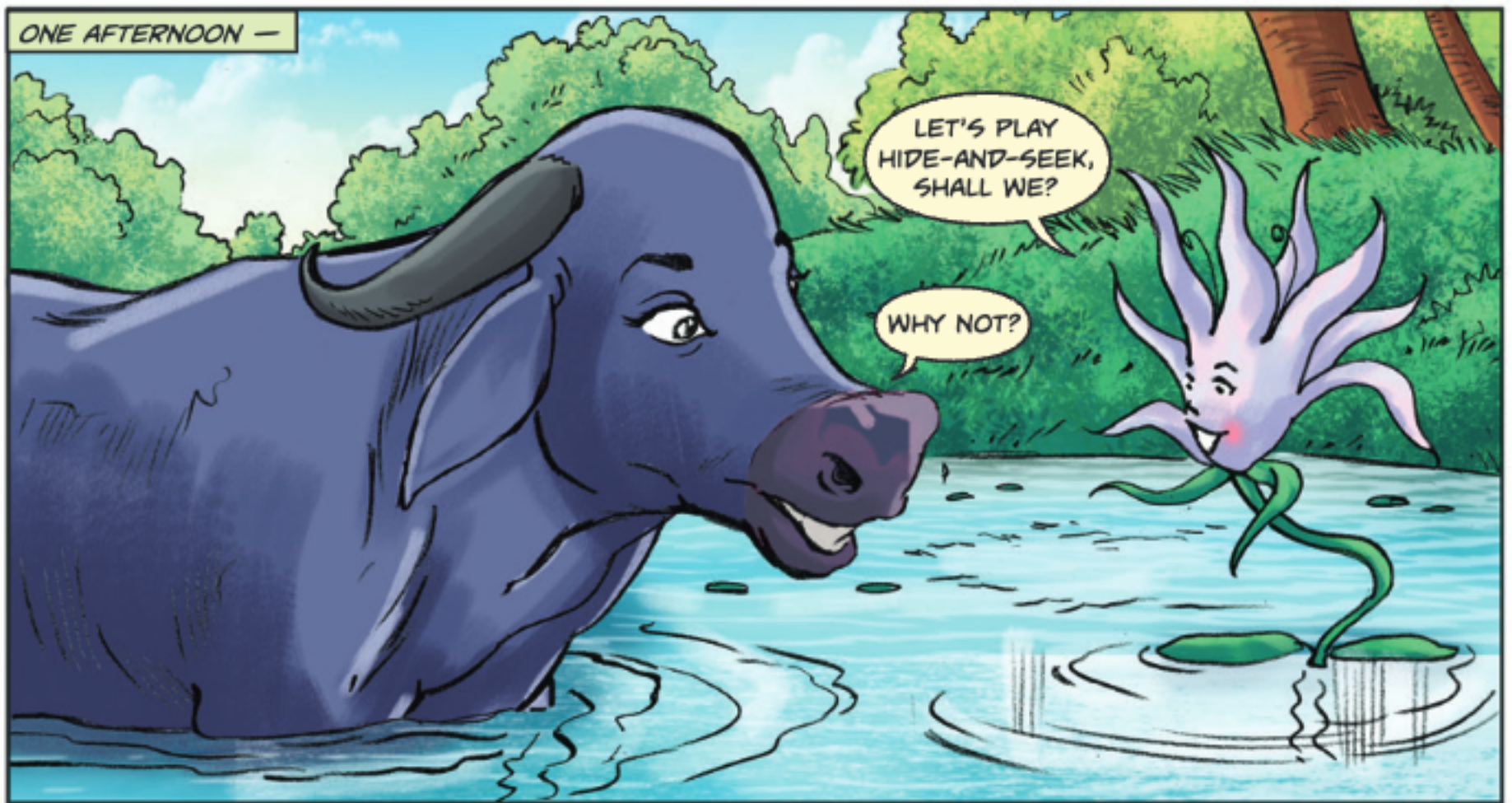
HAVING COLLECTED ENOUGH WEALTH TO LEAD A COMFORTABLE LIFE FOR YEARS TO COME, THE TWO RETURNED TO THEIR VILLAGE.

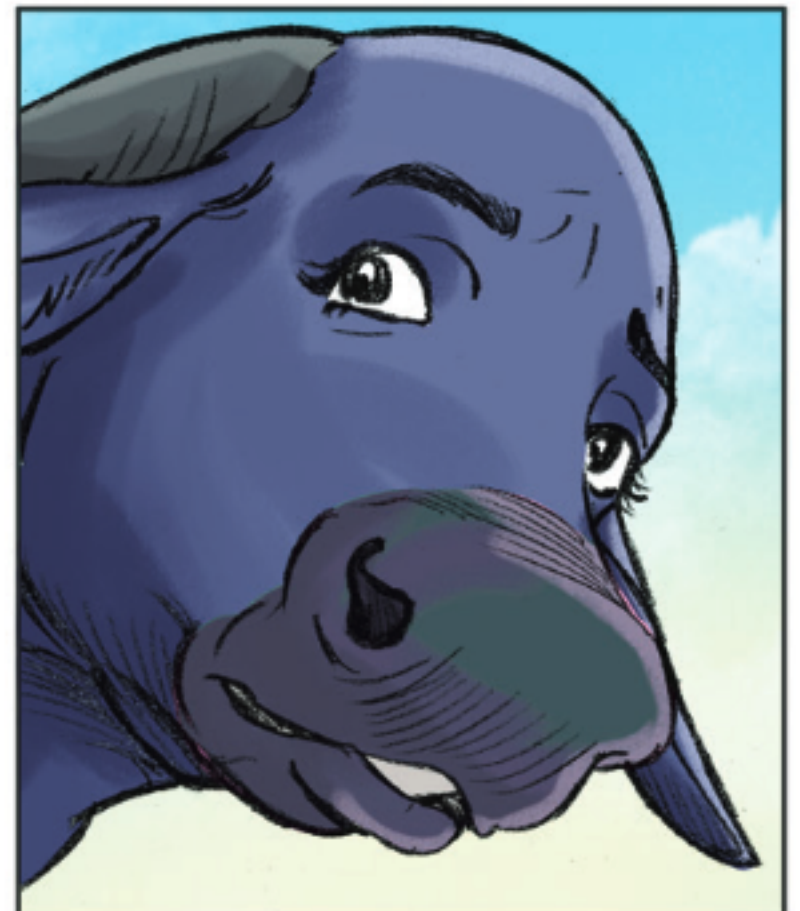
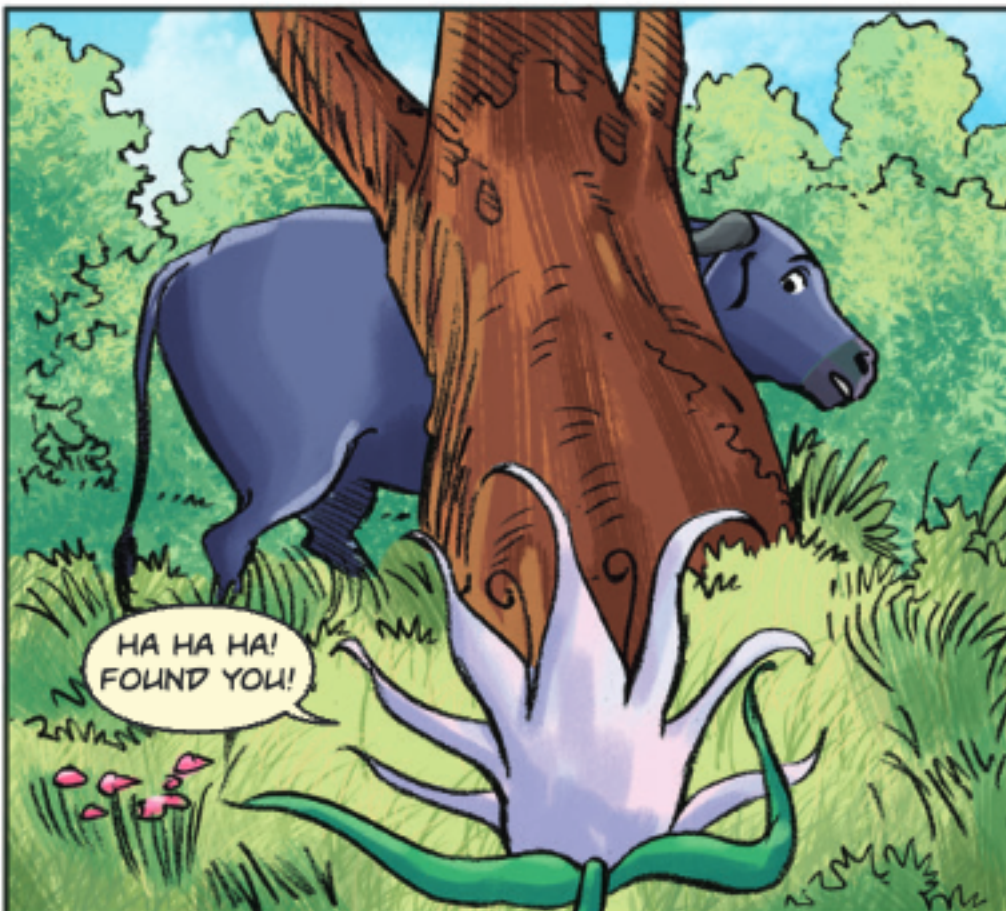
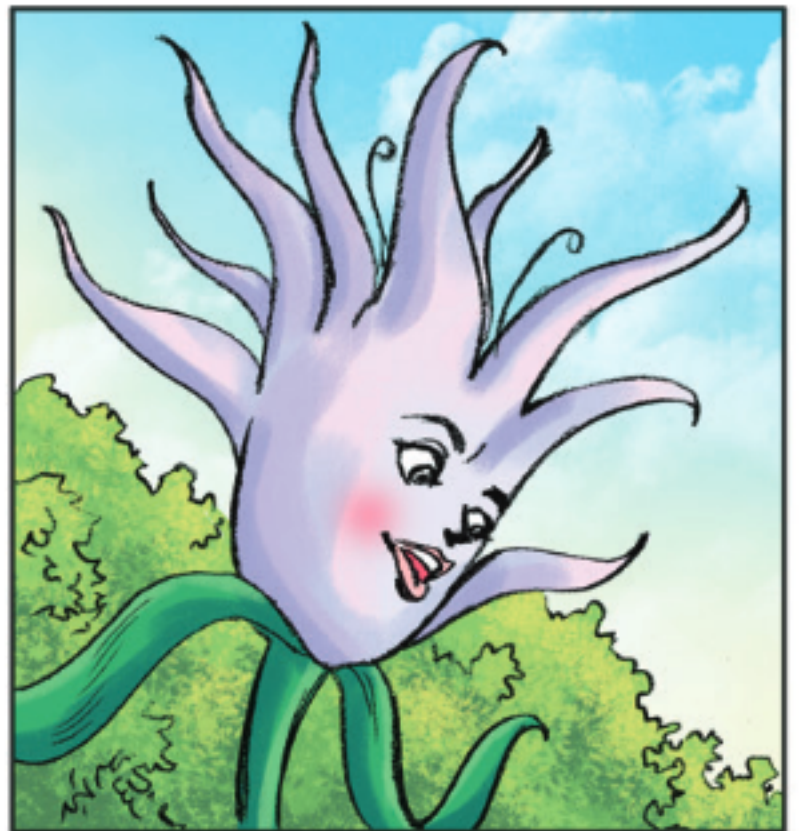
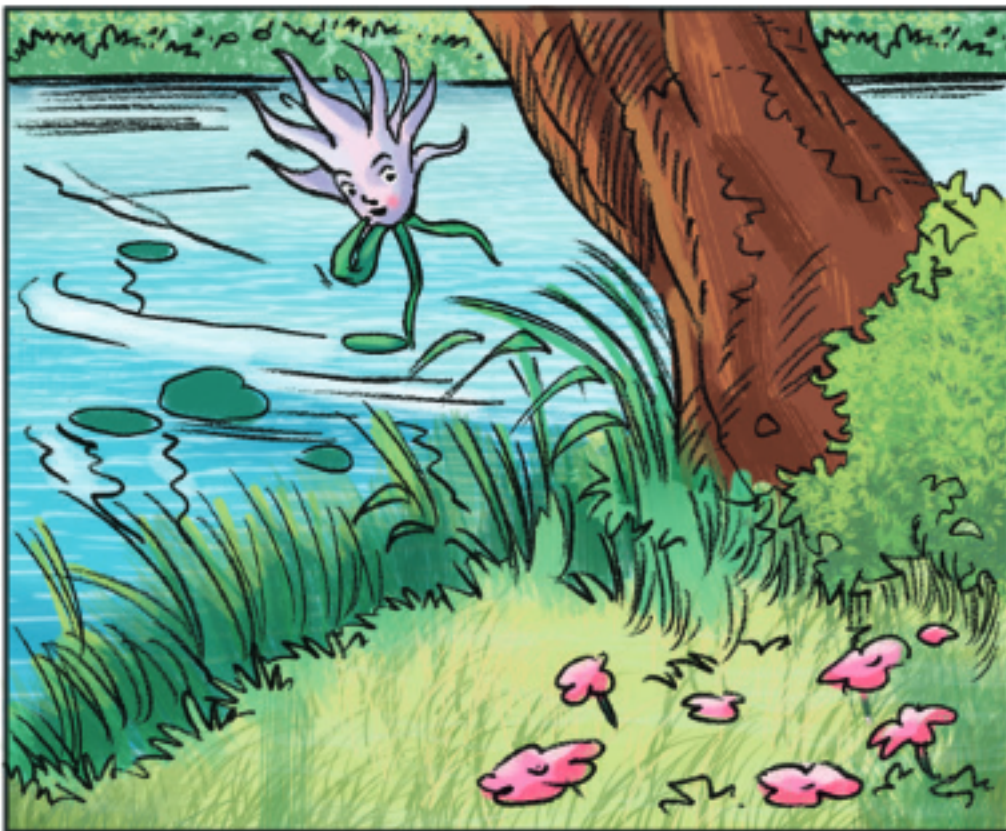
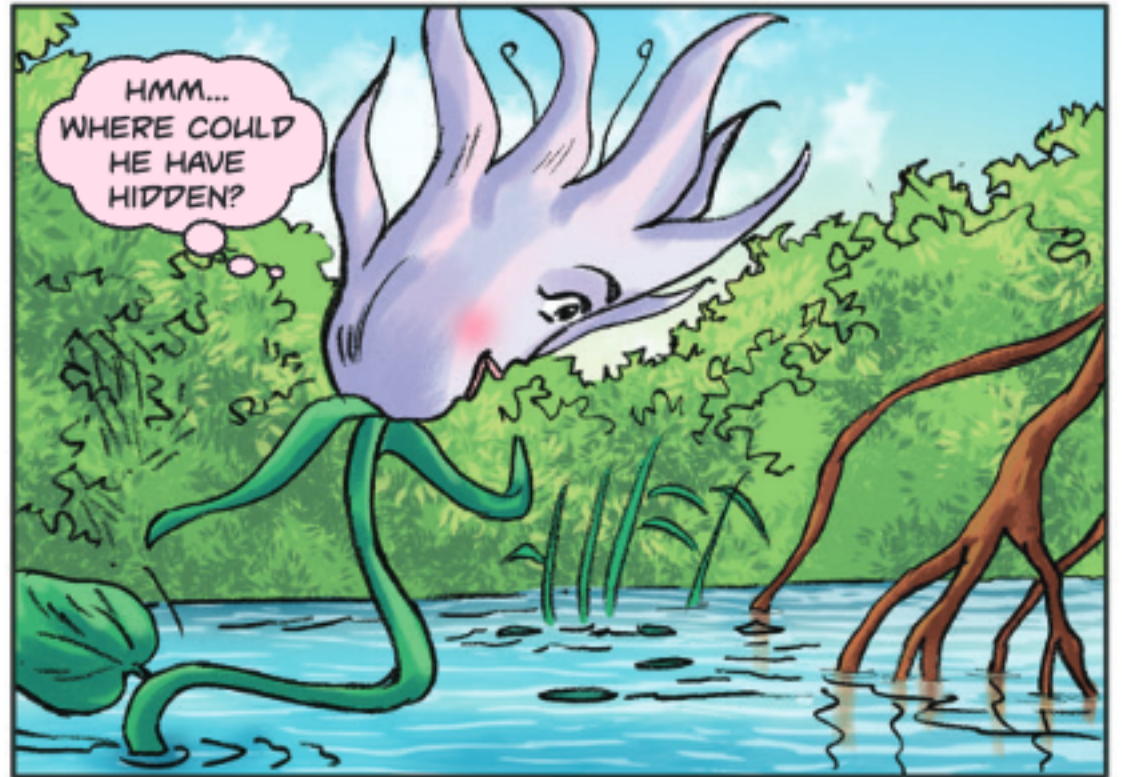


SMELLY LILY

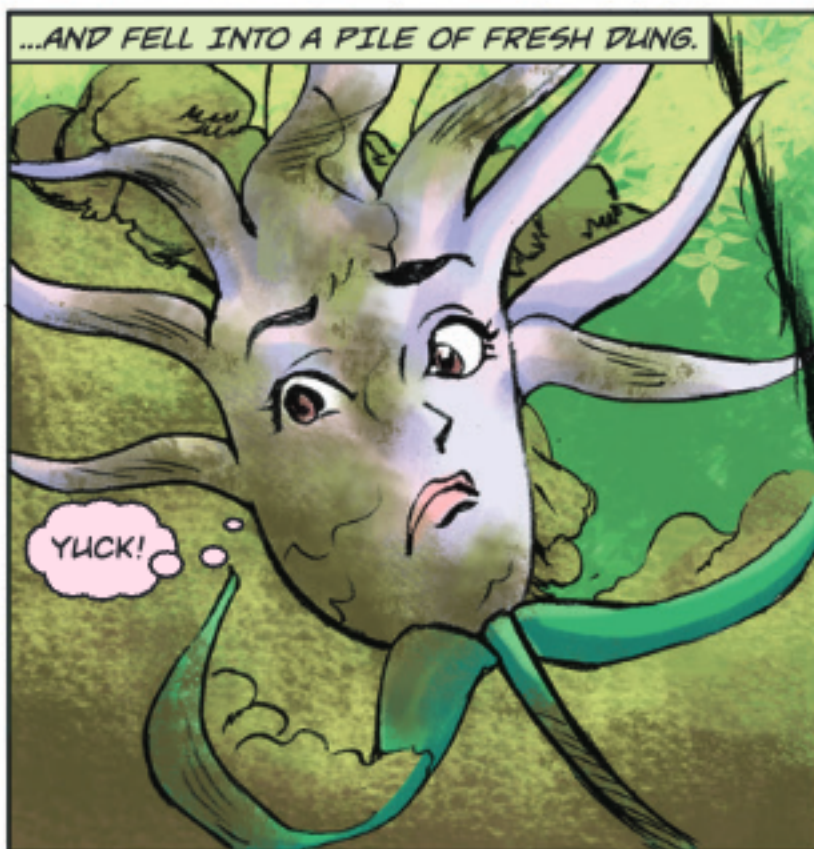
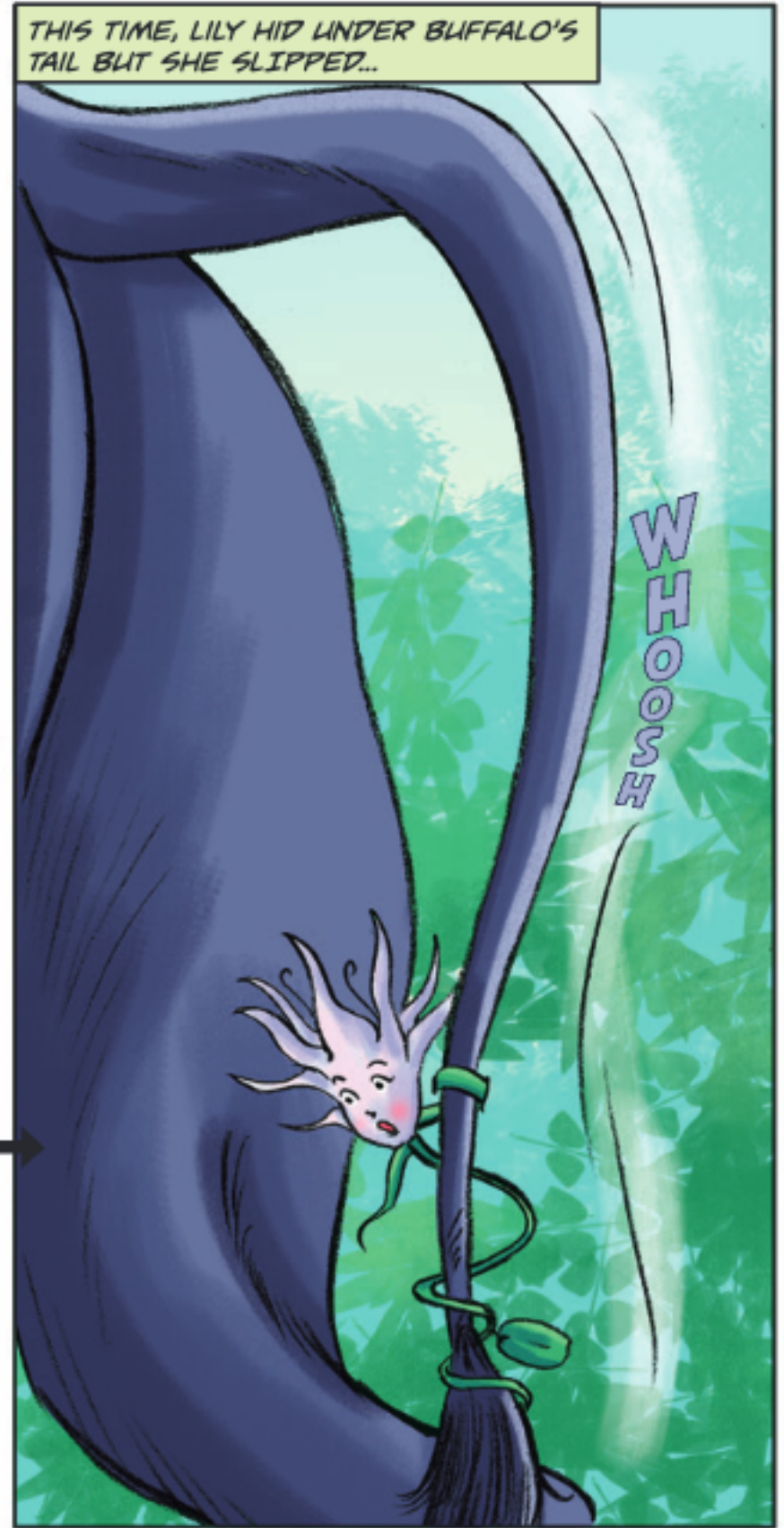
ONCE UPON A TIME, LILY AND BUFFALO WERE FRIENDS.

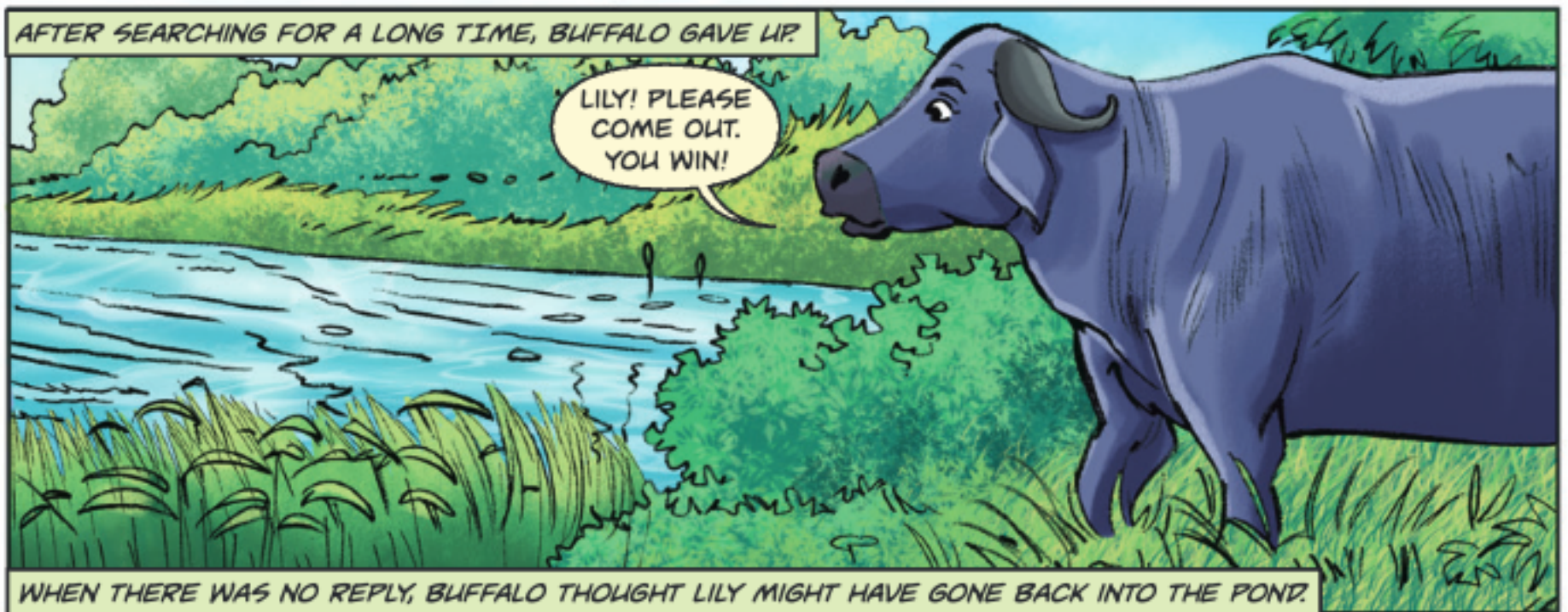
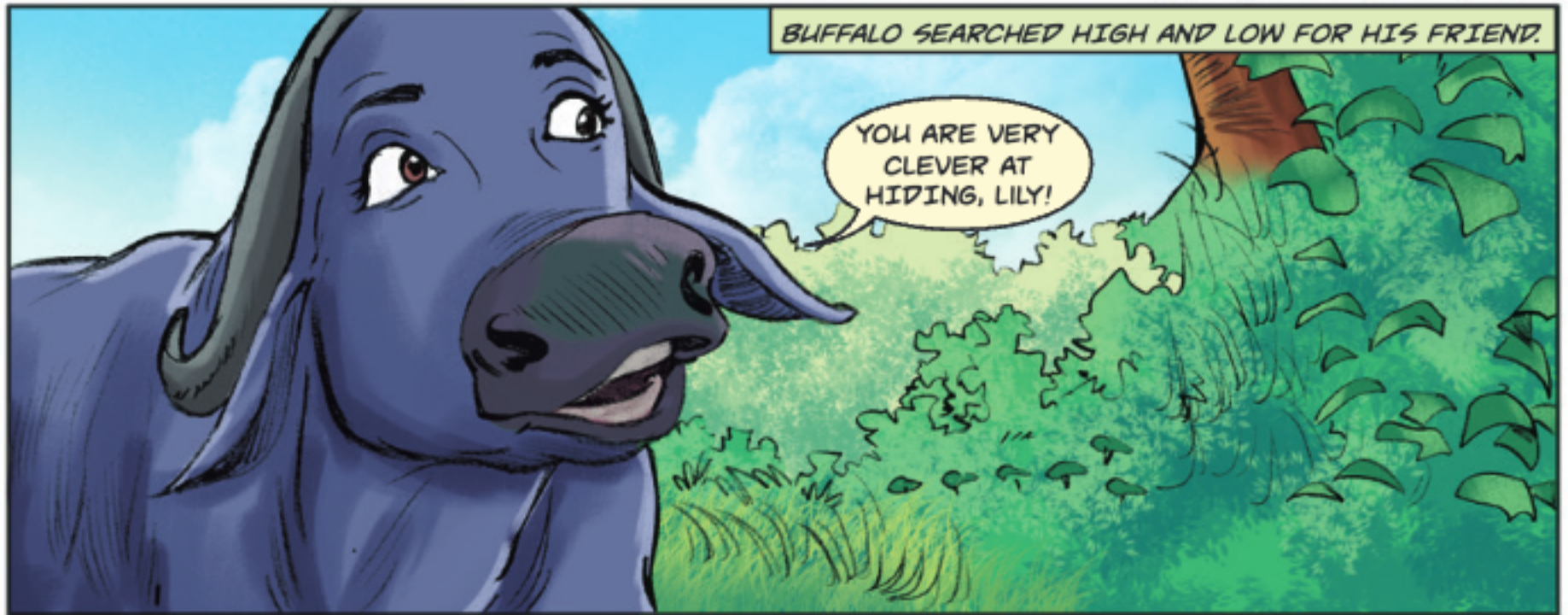


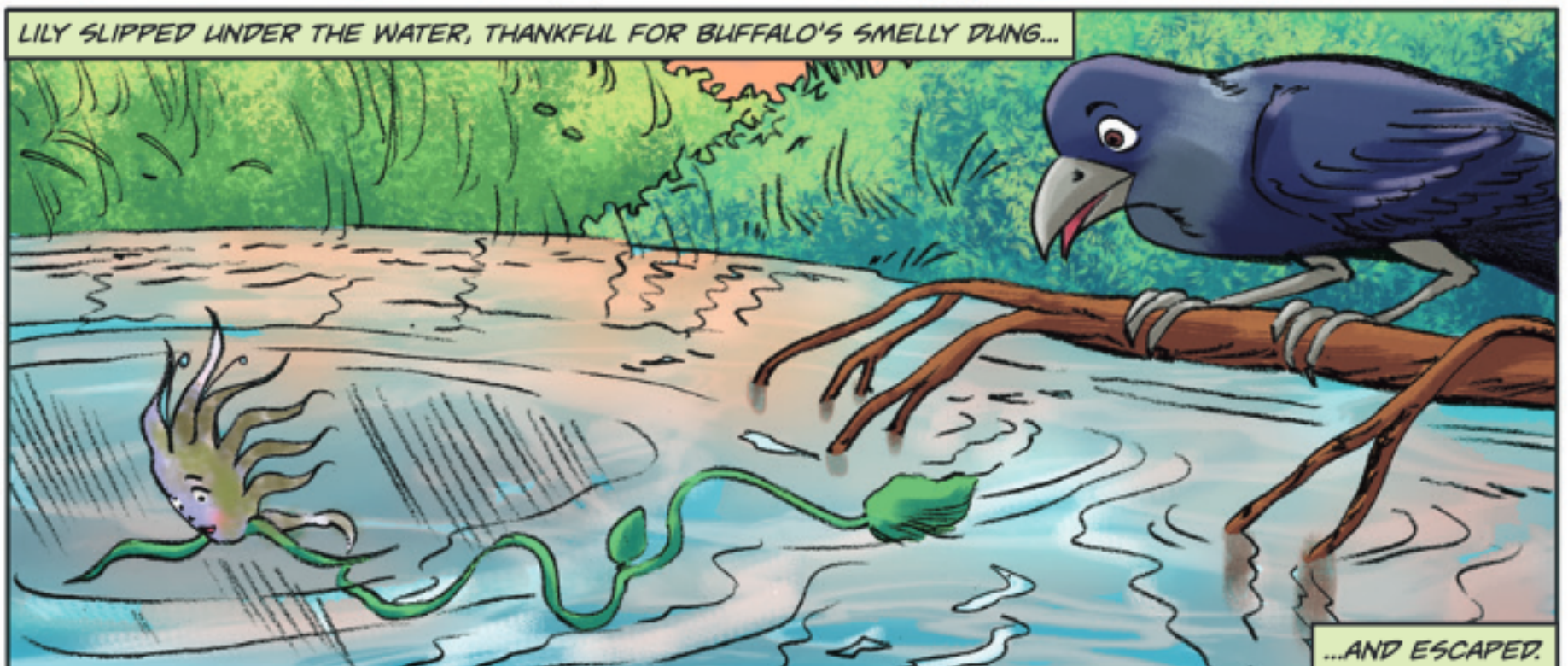
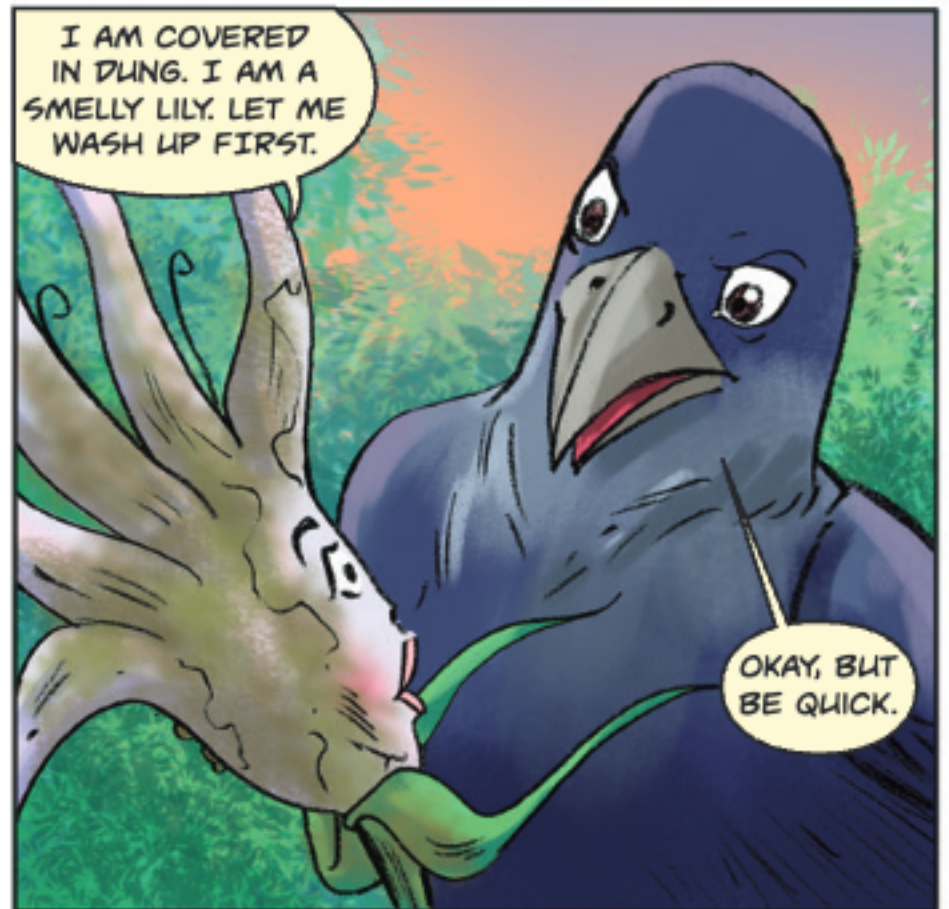
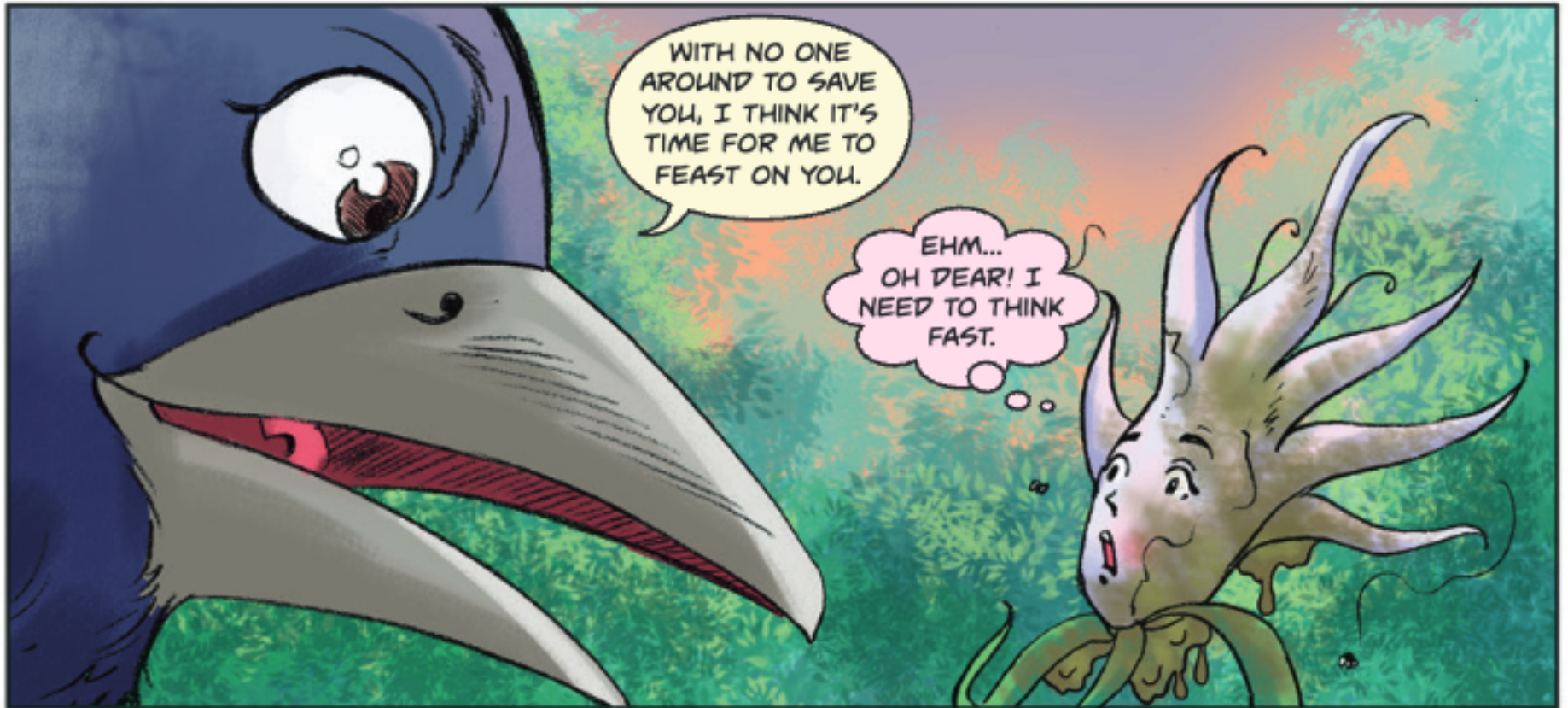












THE CROCODILE AND THE FOX

ONCE, IN A DENSE JUNGLE, THERE RAN A WIDE RIVER THAT WAS HOME TO MANY CROCODILES. ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER, THERE ALSO LIVED A CLEVER FOX.

EVERY DAY, THE FOX WOULD CROSS THE RIVER TO GO AND FIND FOOD ON THE OTHER SIDE.

THIS FOX LOOKS SO DELICIOUS! I'M SURE I CAN CATCH HIM WHILE HE CROSSES THE RIVER. HE WOULD MAKE A YUMMY MEAL.

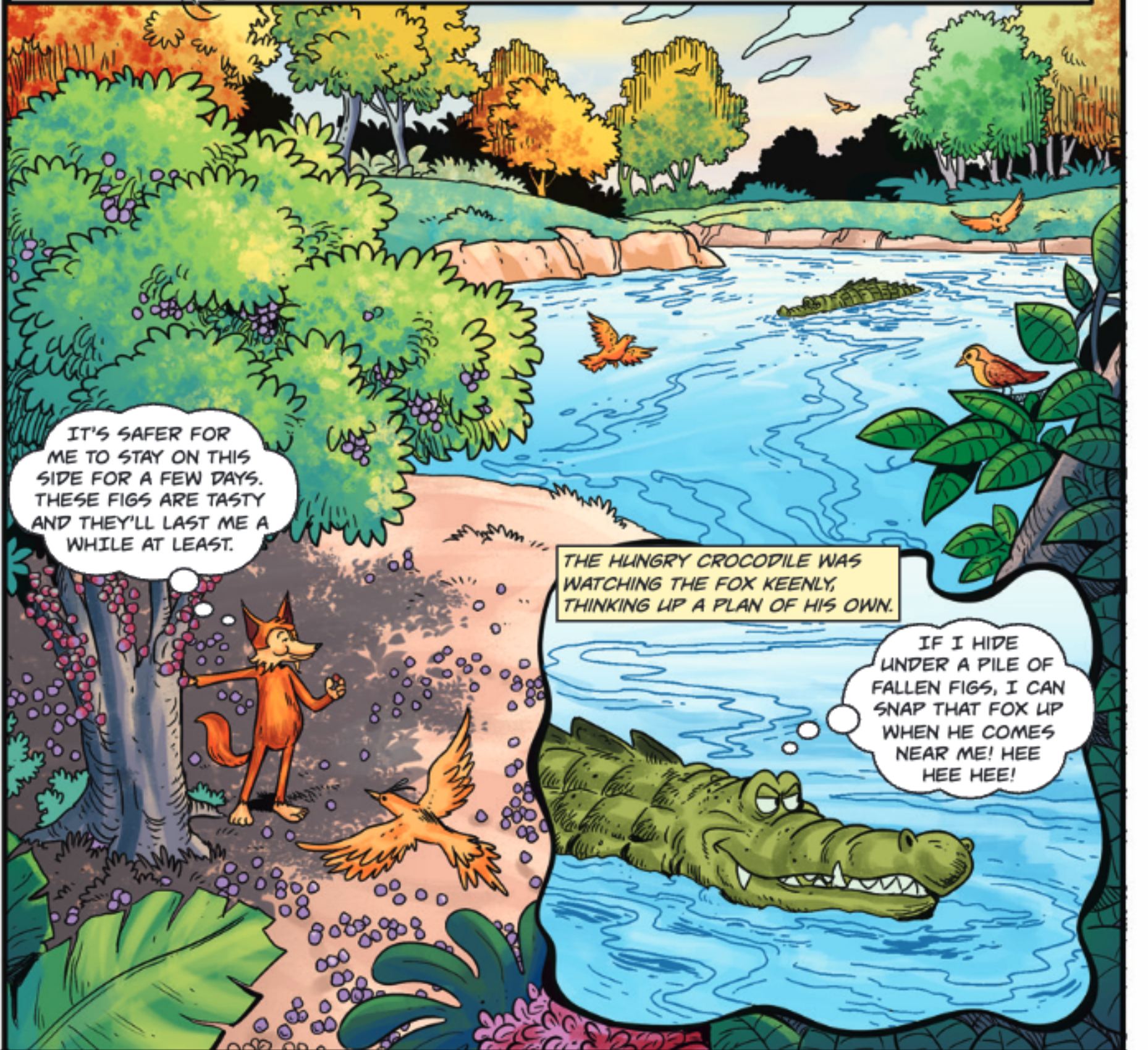
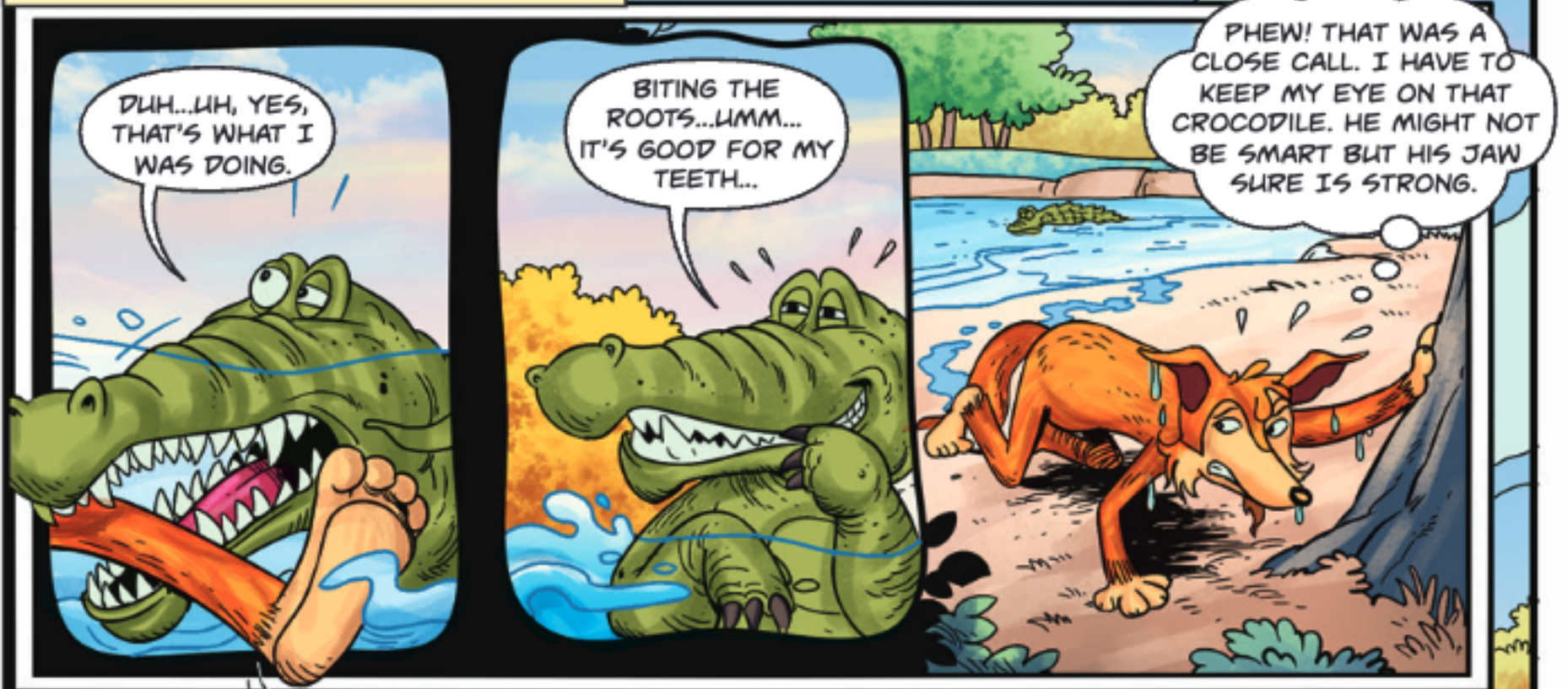
ONE DAY —

OWWW, A CROCODILE HAS CAUGHT MY LEG! I'LL HAVE TO THINK FAST OR I'LL BE A THREE-LEGGED FOX!

SO —

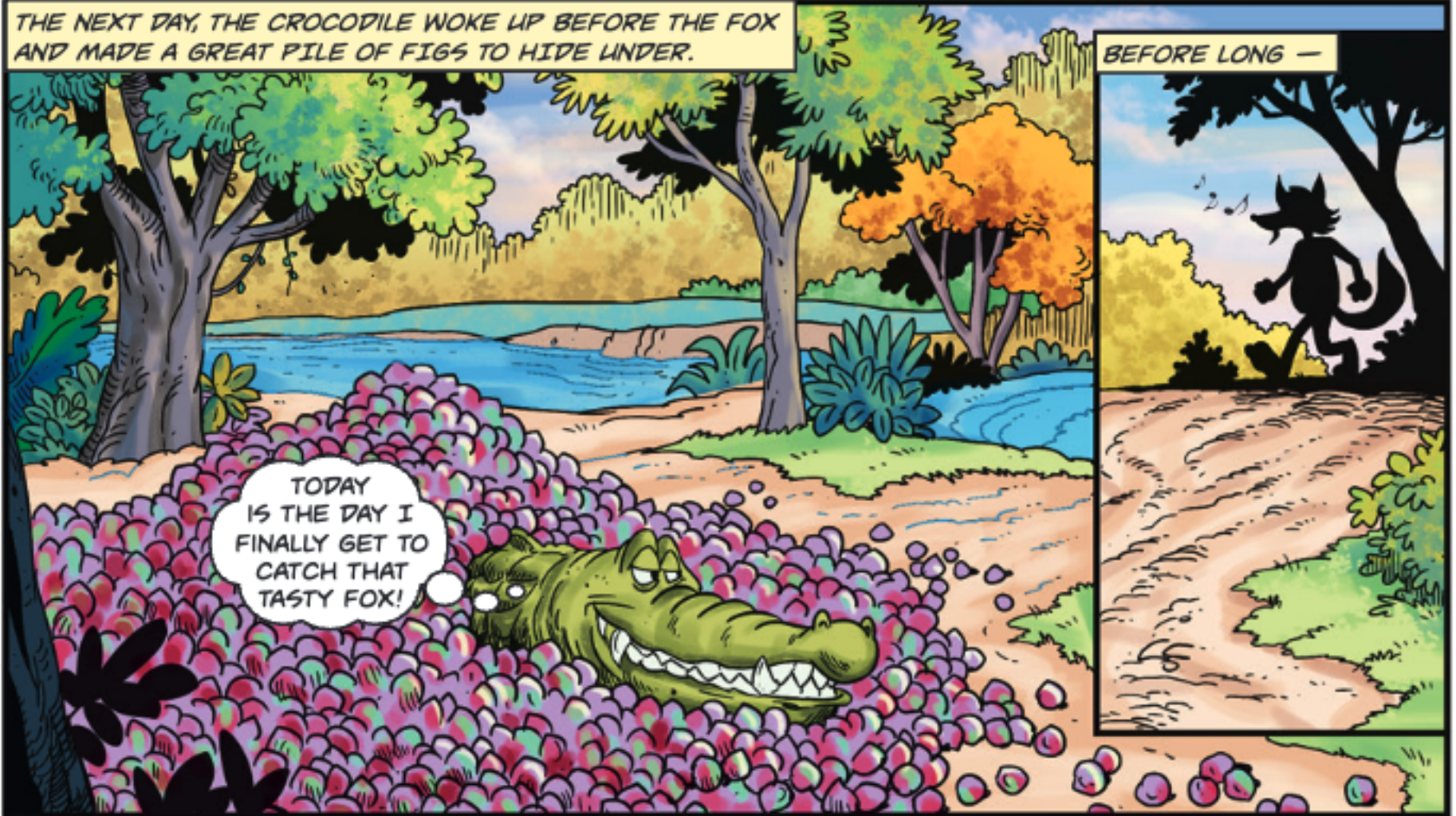
CROCODILE, WHY ARE YOU BITING A ROOT AT THE BOTTOM OF THE RIVER? ARE YOU TRYING TO SHARPEN YOUR TEETH?

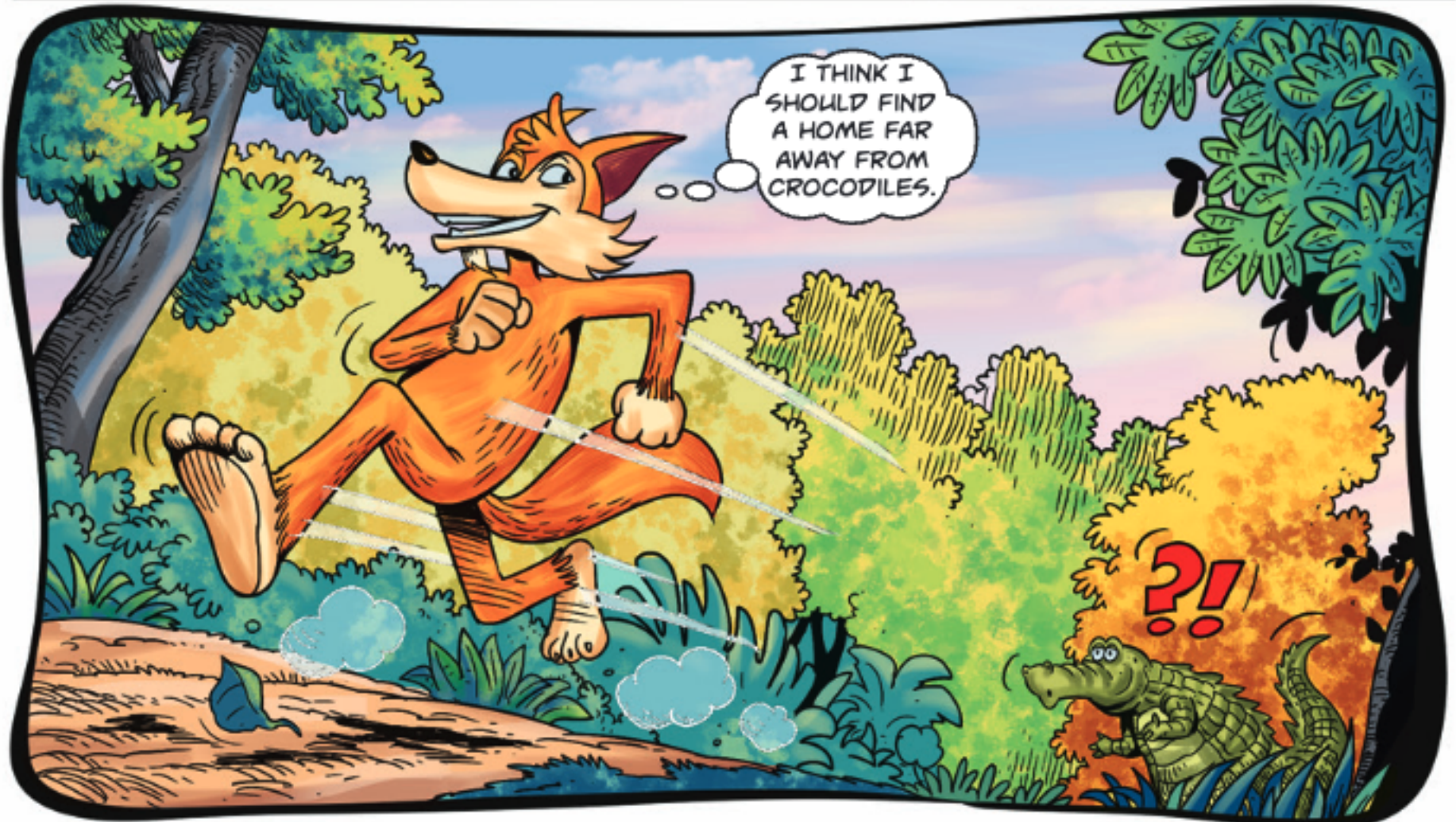
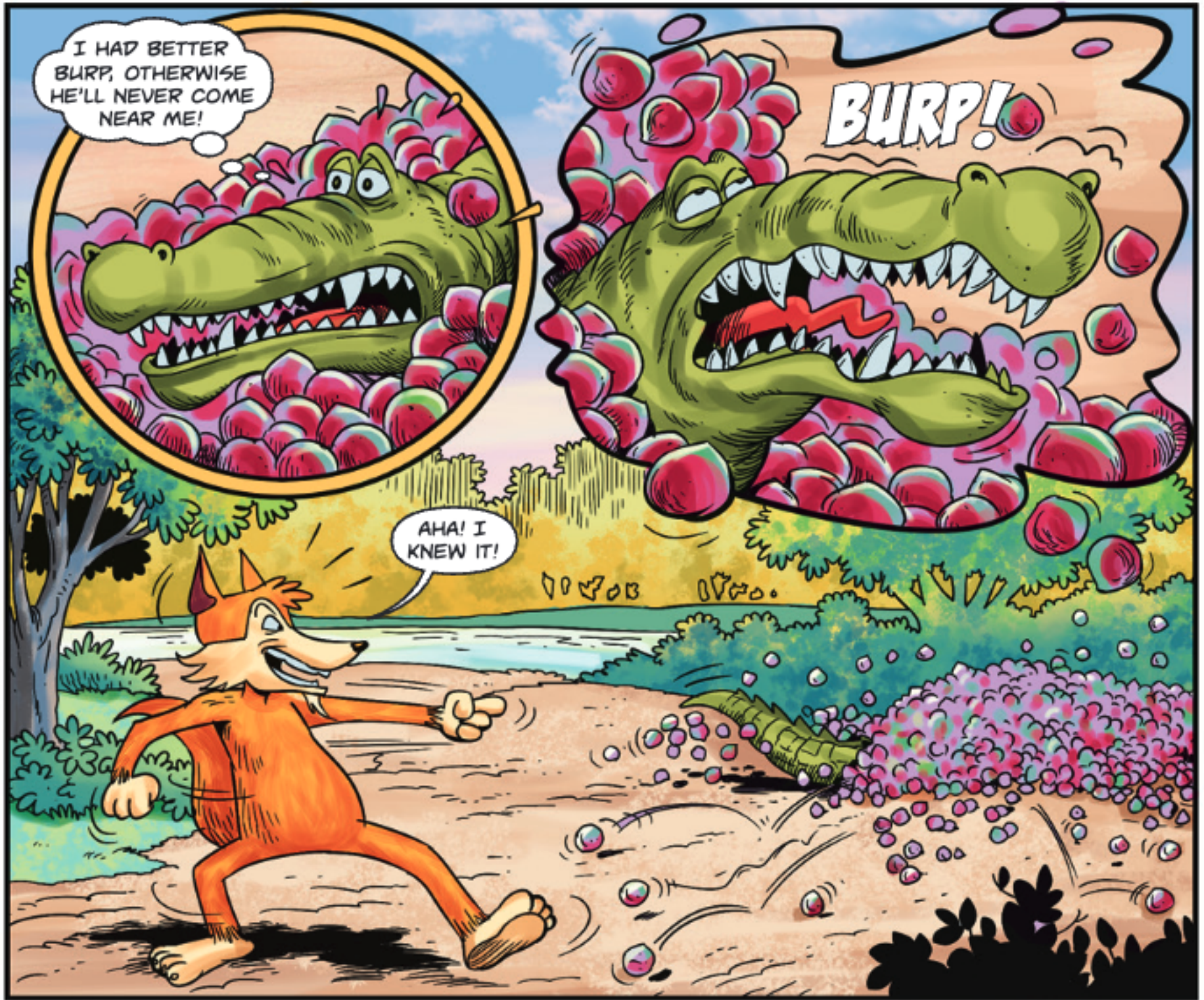
THE CROCODILE FELL FOR THE FOX'S TRICK.



THE NEXT DAY, THE CROCODILE WOKE UP BEFORE THE FOX AND MADE A GREAT PILE OF FIGS TO HIDE UNDER.

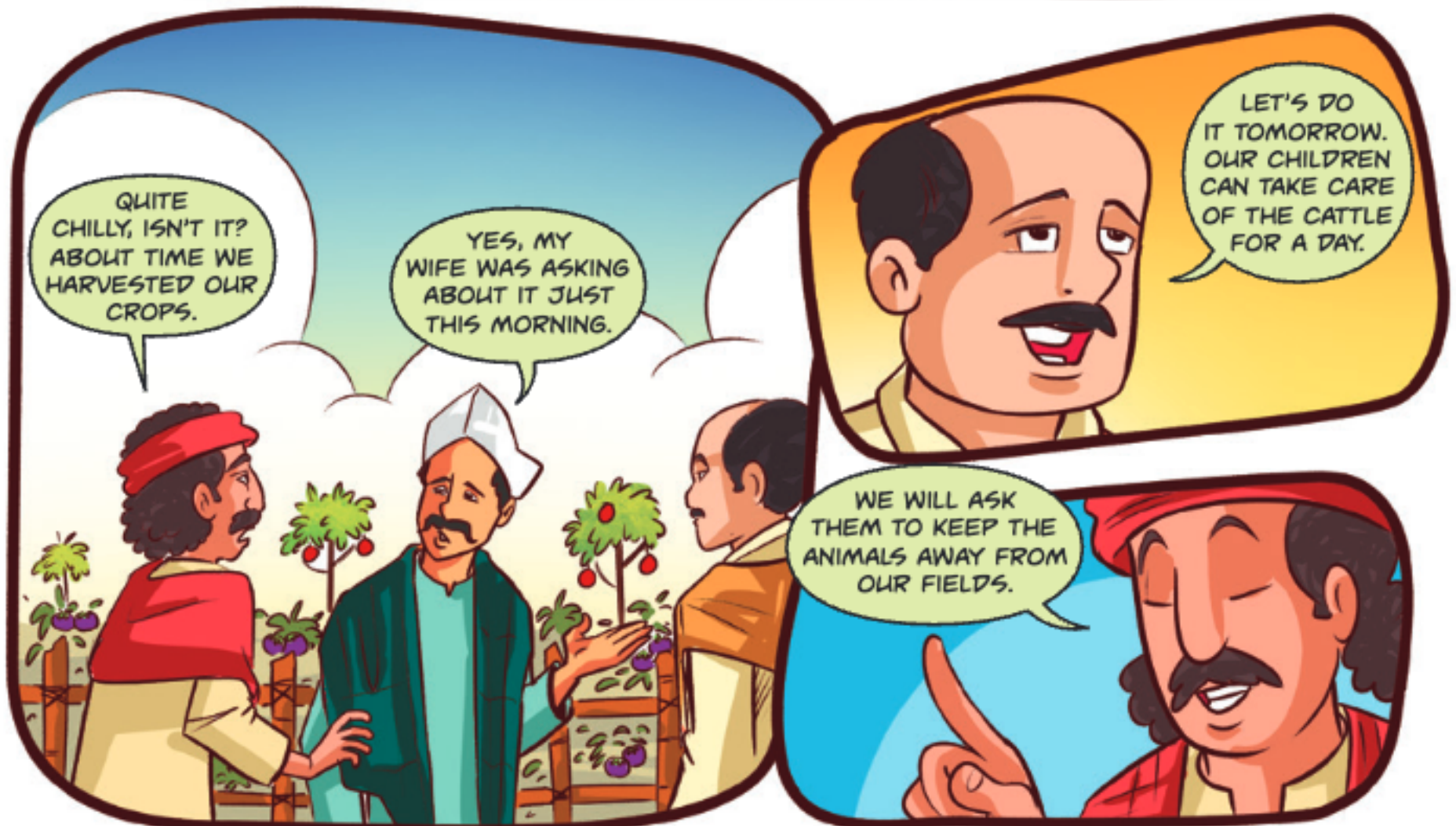
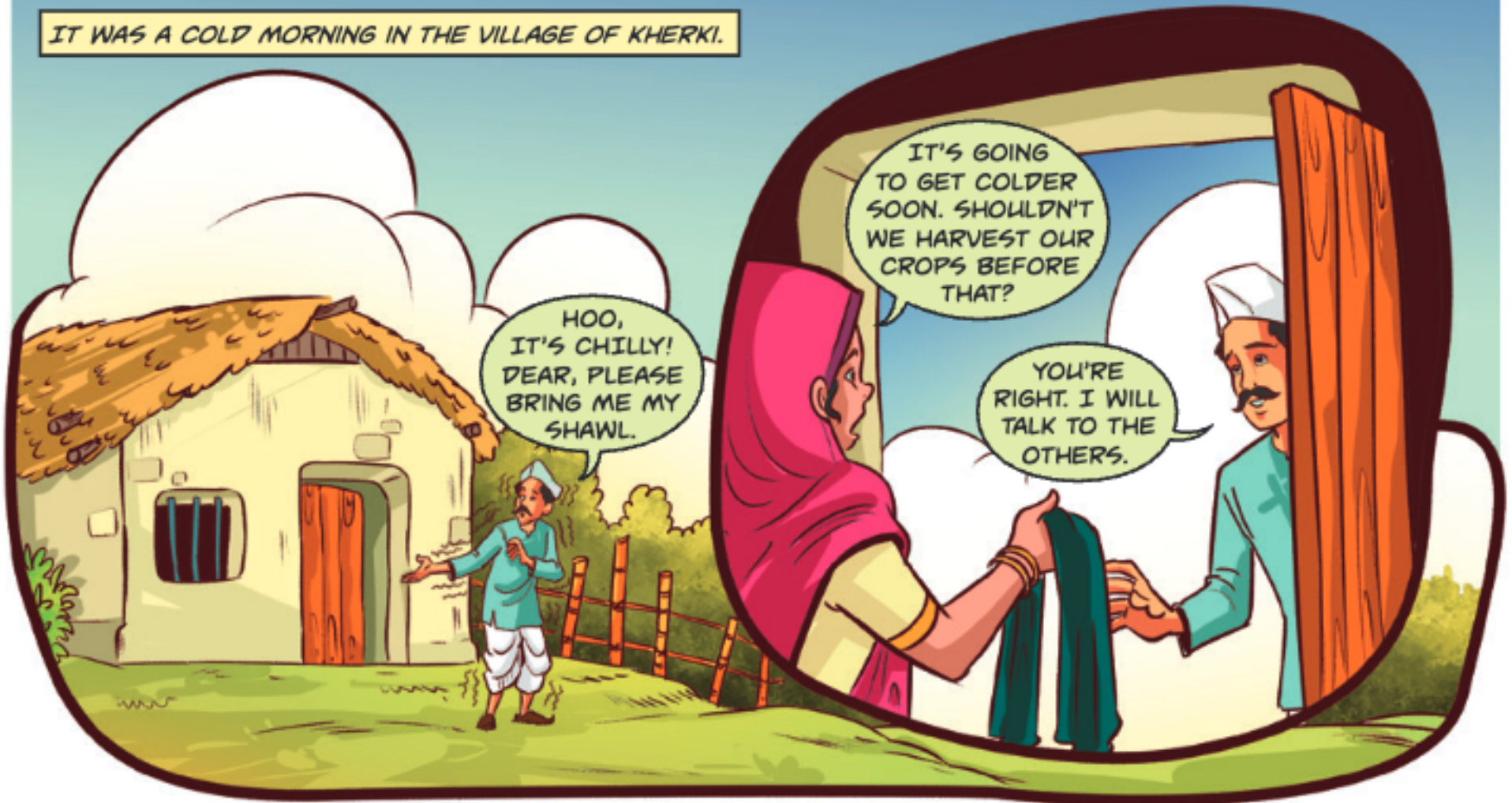
BEFORE LONG —



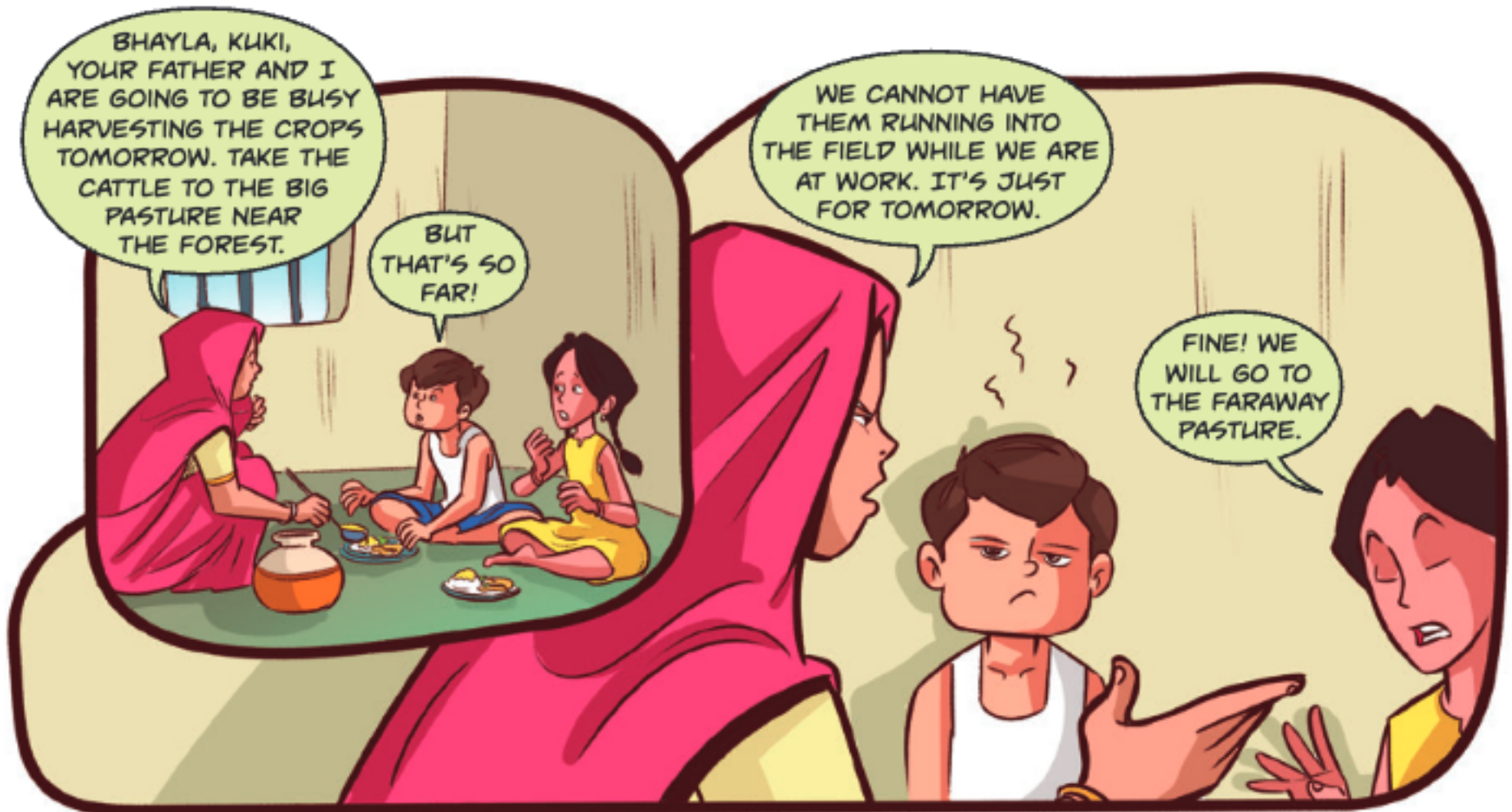


THE CARELESS CHILDREN

IT WAS A COLD MORNING IN THE VILLAGE OF KHERKI.

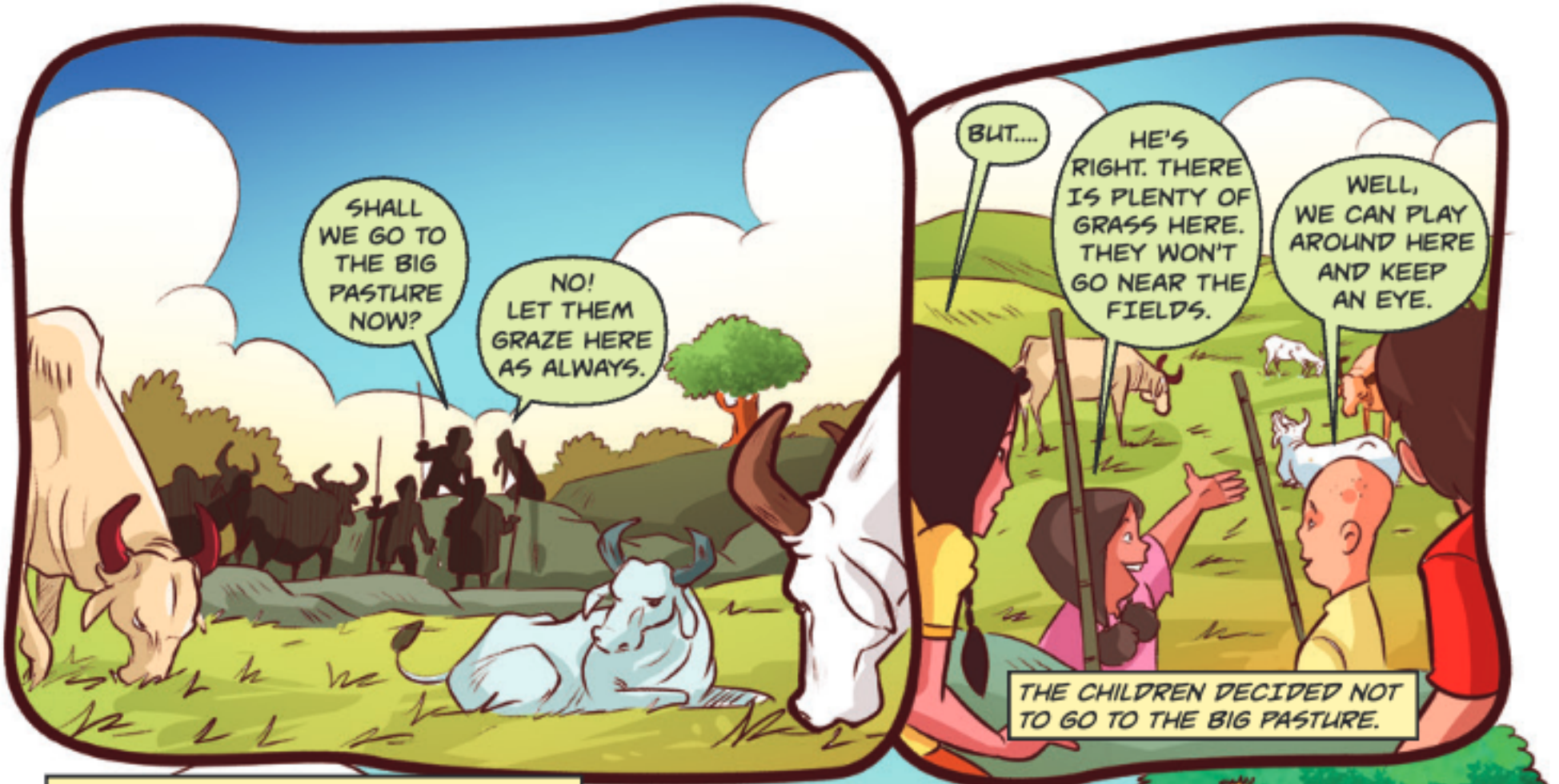


THAT NIGHT —

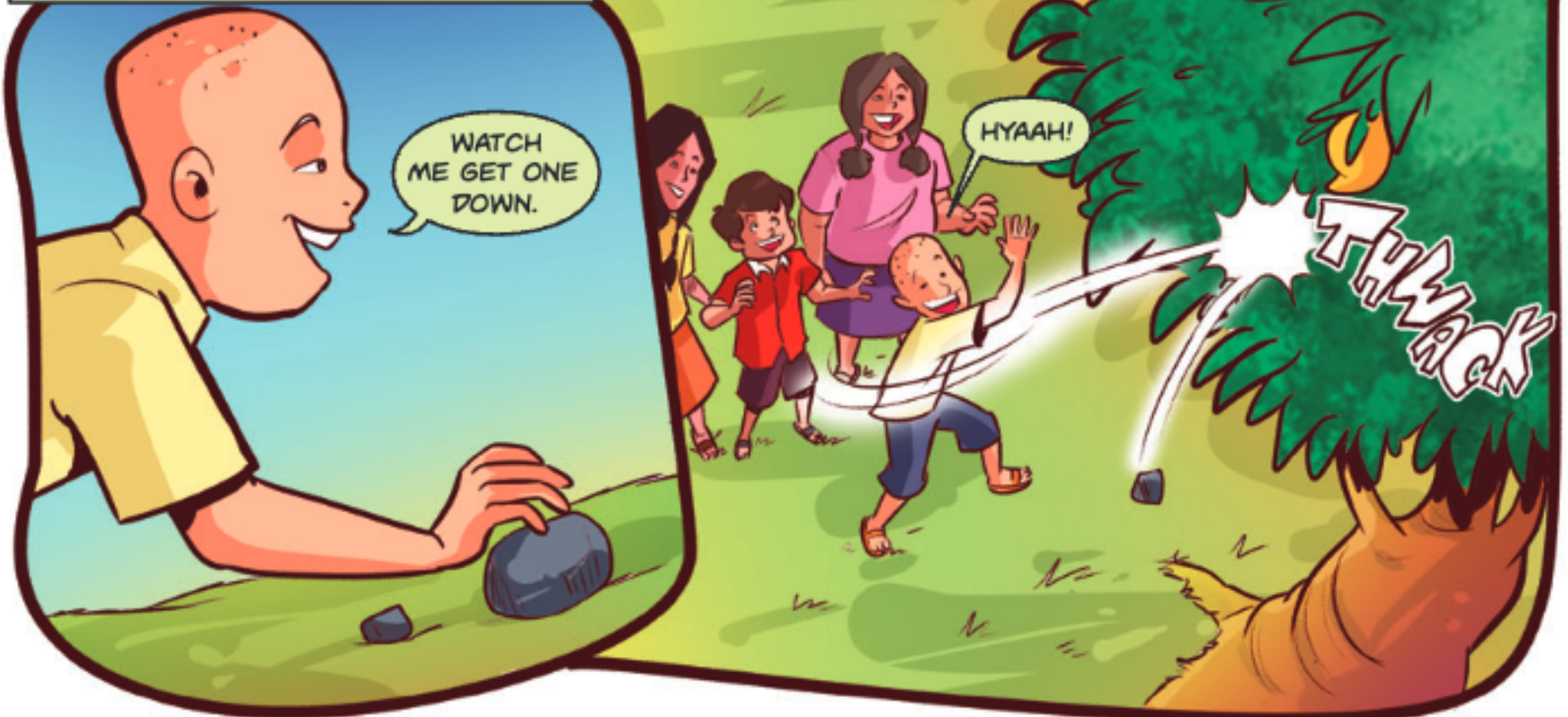


EARLY NEXT MORNING —





AS THE CATTLE GRAZED PEACEFULLY —



*A GAME PLAYED WITH TWO STICKS; A LARGE ONE, CALLED A DANDA, IS USED TO HIT A SMALLER ONE, THE GILLI



THE CHILDREN CHASED AFTER THE FLOCK OF PARROTS.



WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO TO SCARE THEM?

SHH! NOT SO LOUD, YOU ARE SCARING THEM ALREADY!

HA HA!

OKAY SOLDIERS, ONTO OUR NEXT TARGET — THAT TREE!

...UNTIL THEY WERE TIRED.

THE SUN IS SETTING.

YES, WE SHOULD GO BACK SOON.

OH, TODAY WAS SUCH FUN!

I HOPE THEY HARVEST TOMORROW AS WELL.

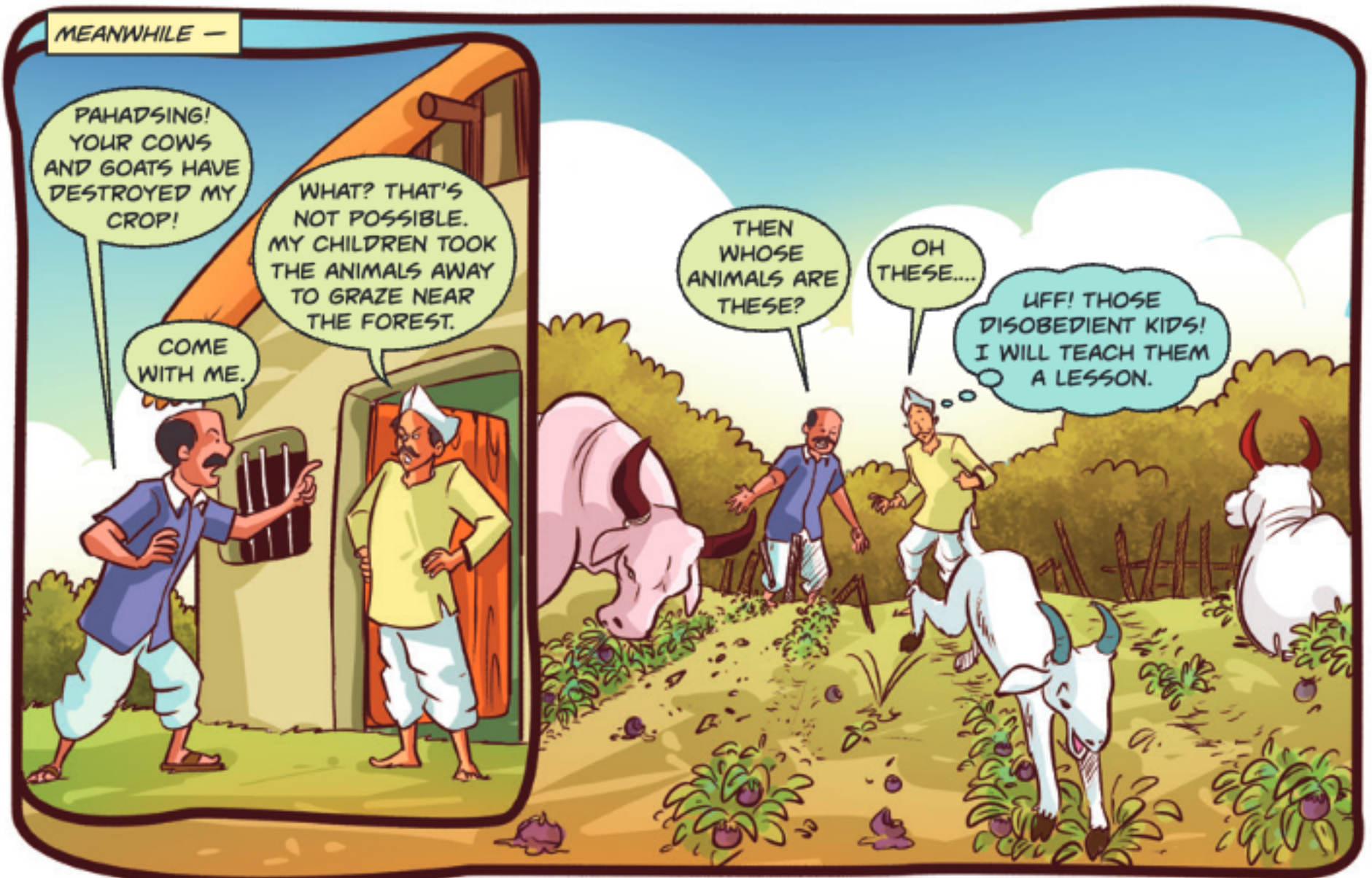
SO THE KIDS WENT FROM TREE TO TREE...

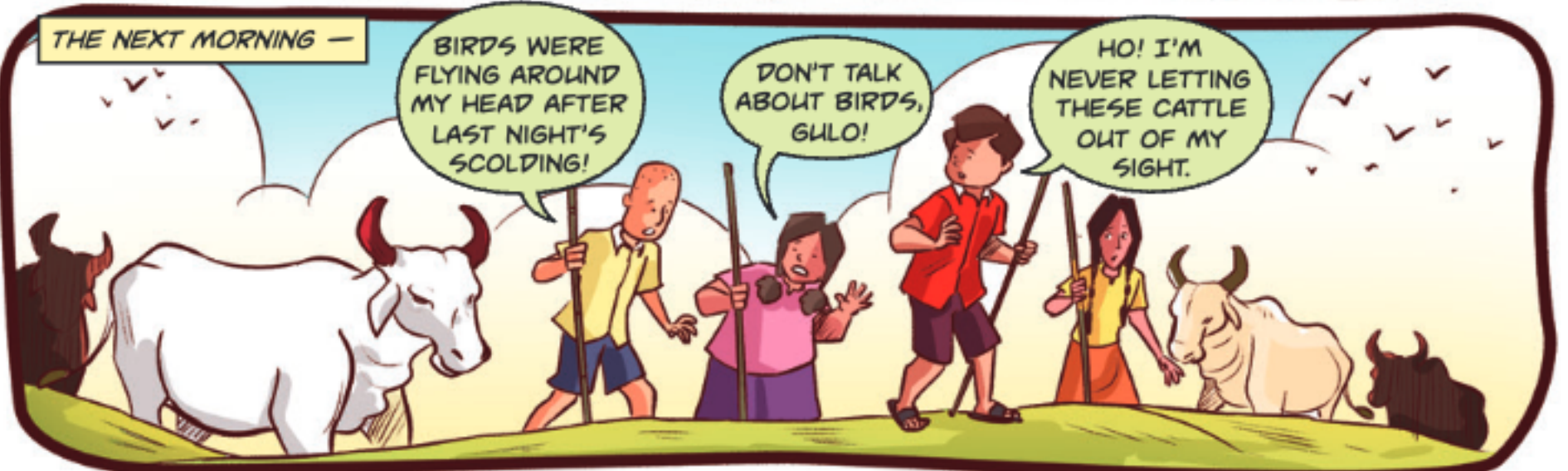
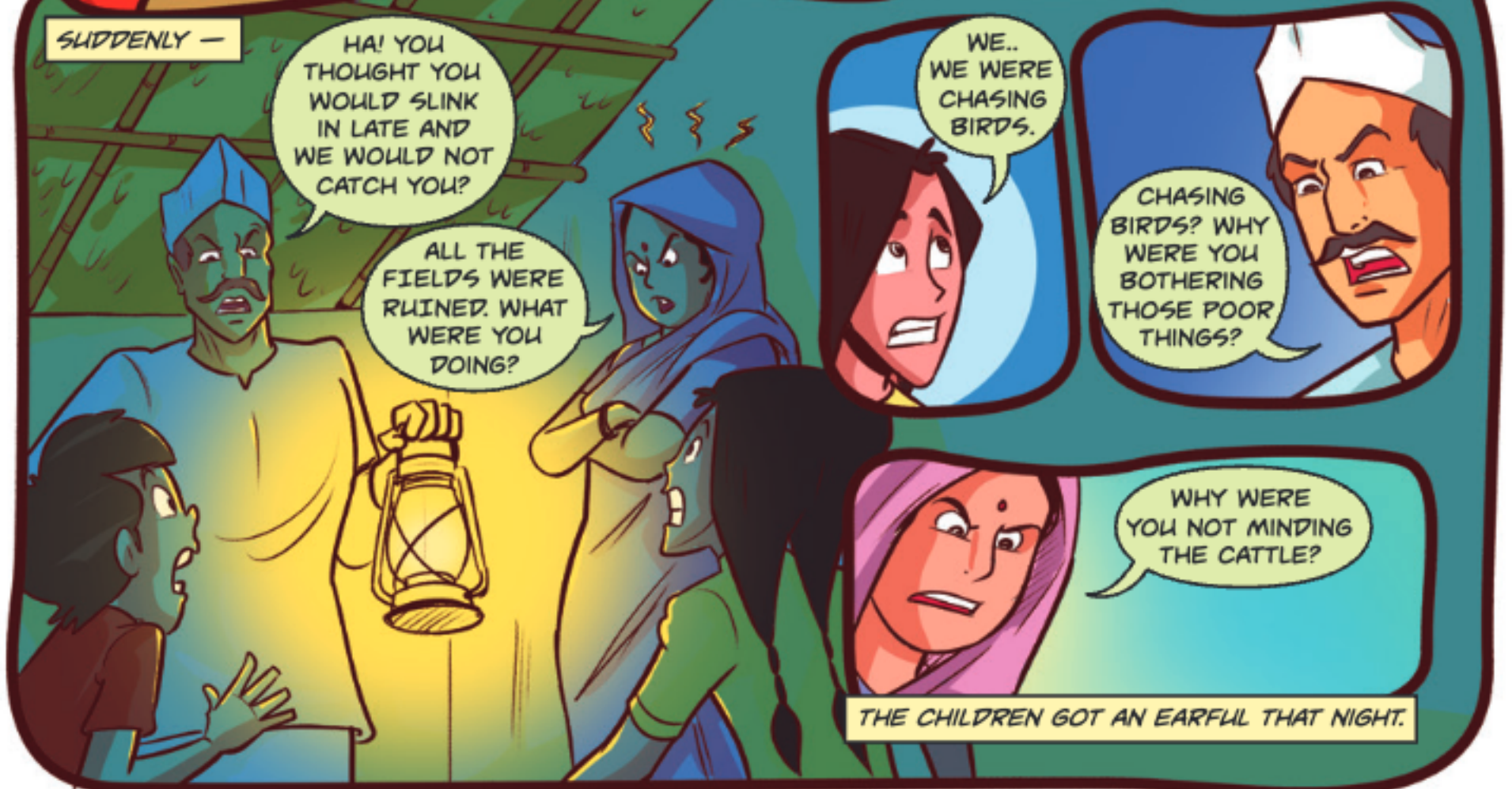
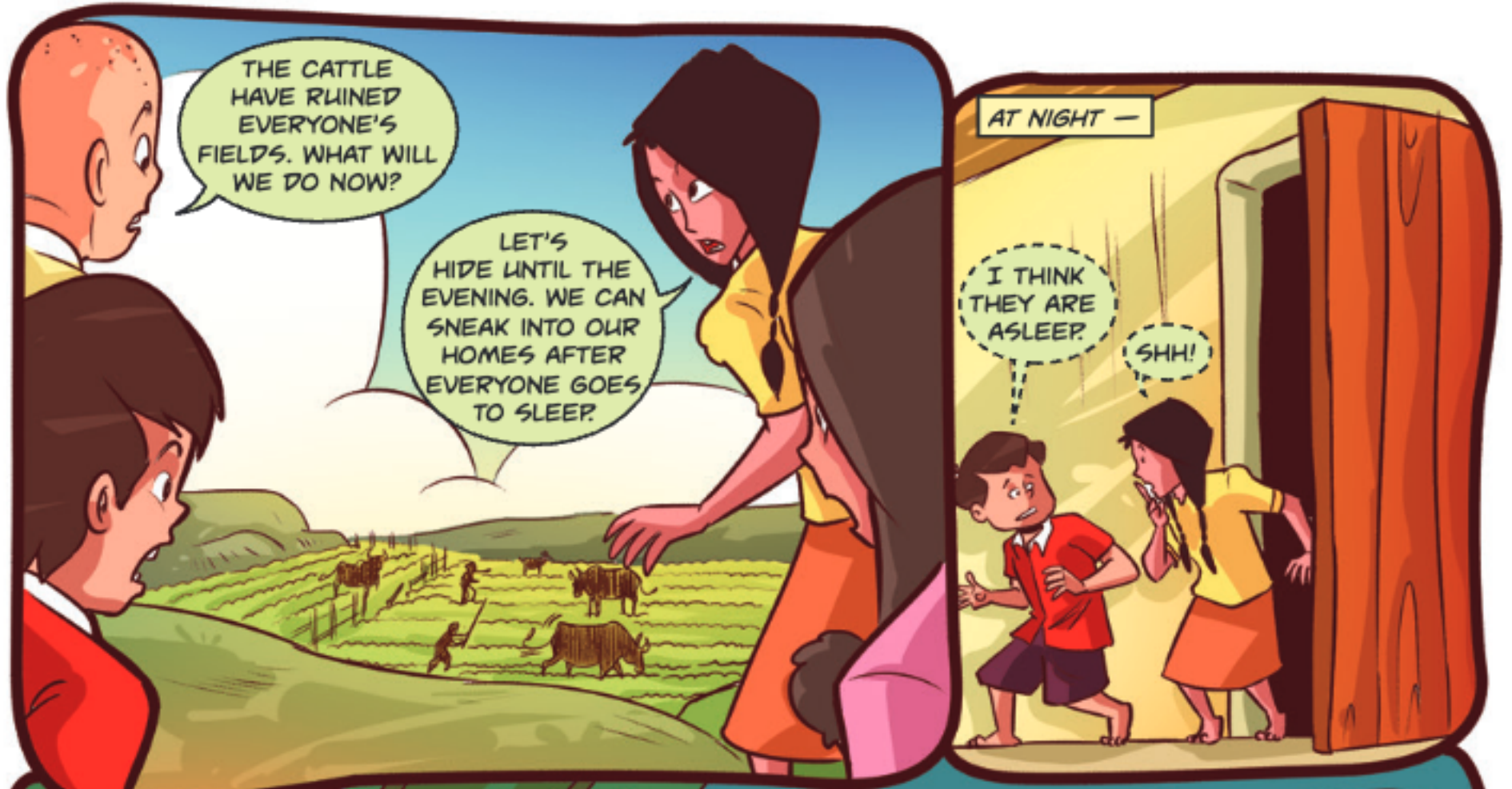


WHEN THEY REACHED THE PASTURE —



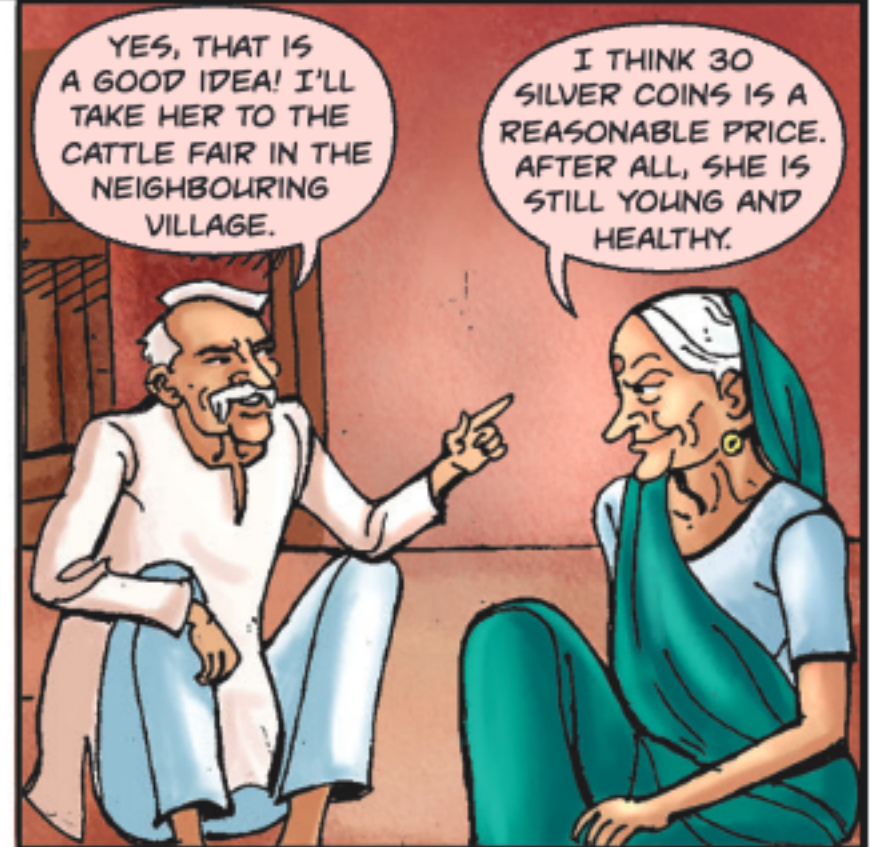
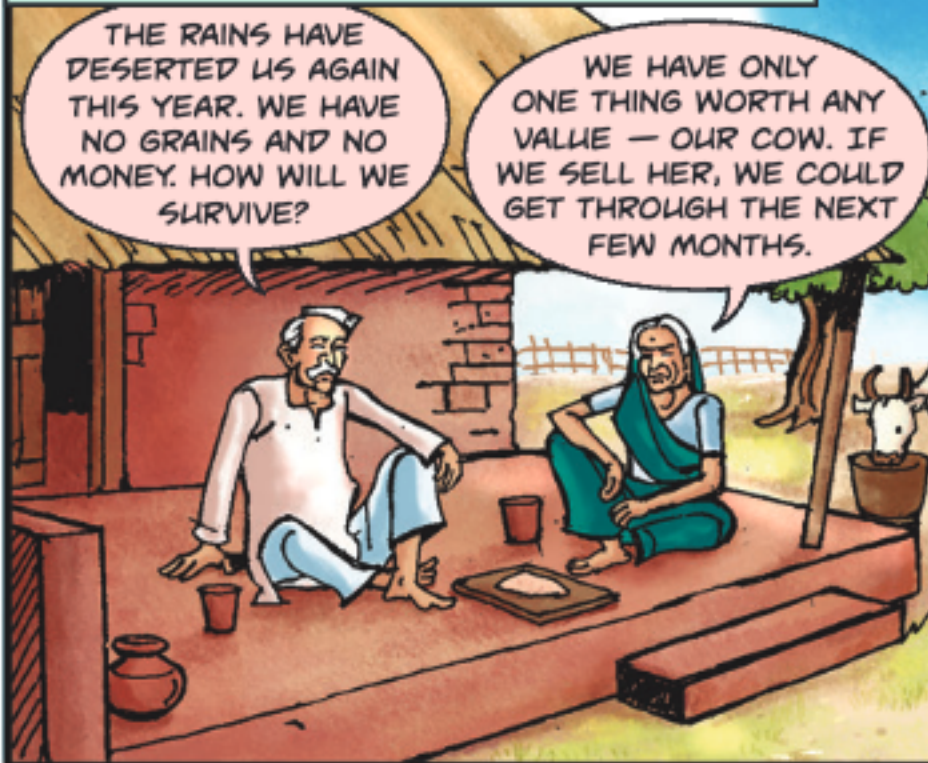
MEANWHILE —



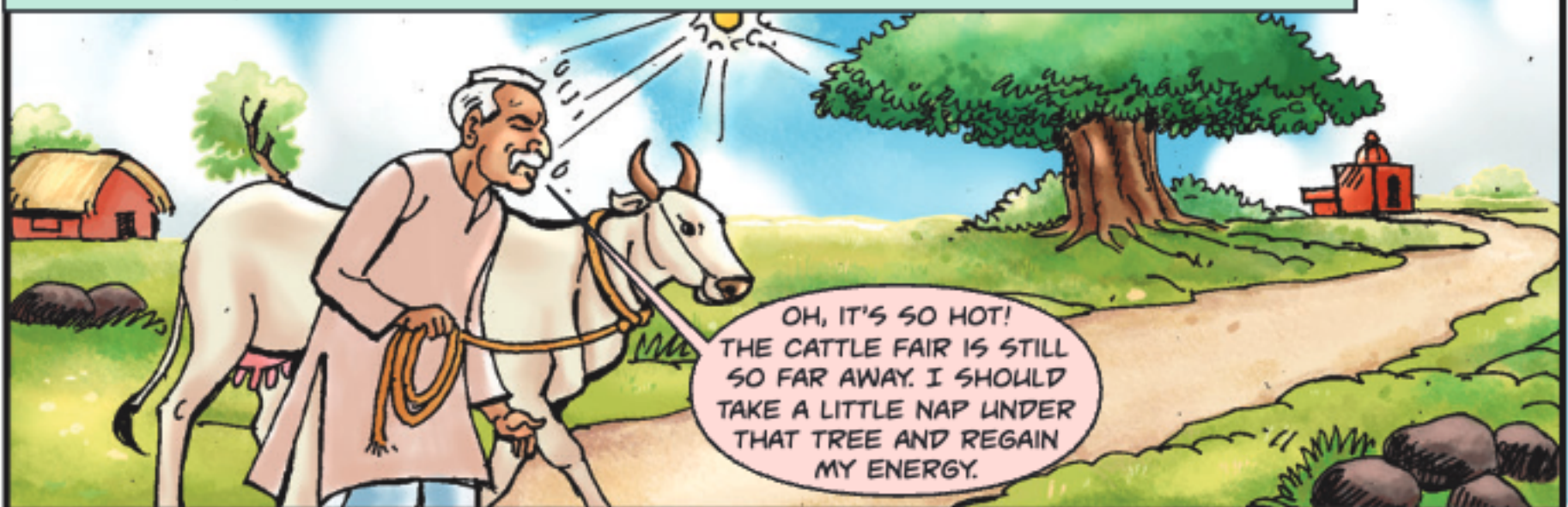


AN UNLIKELY TRADE

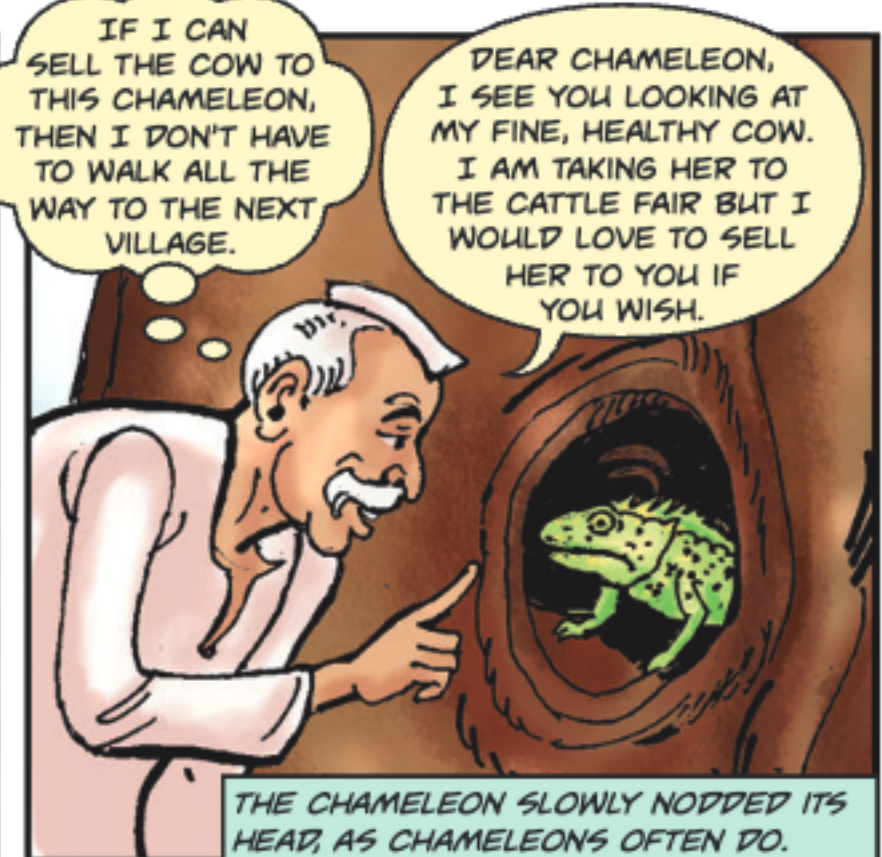
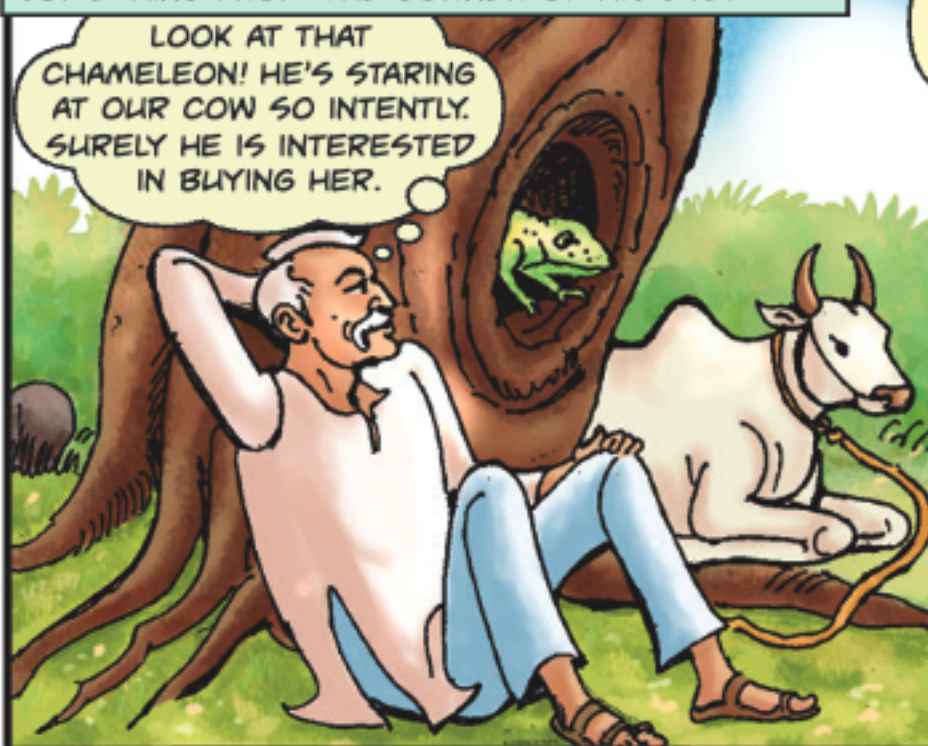
ONCE UPON A TIME, IN A SMALL VILLAGE, THERE LIVED AN OLD COUPLE, BURASING AND GUNJALI.

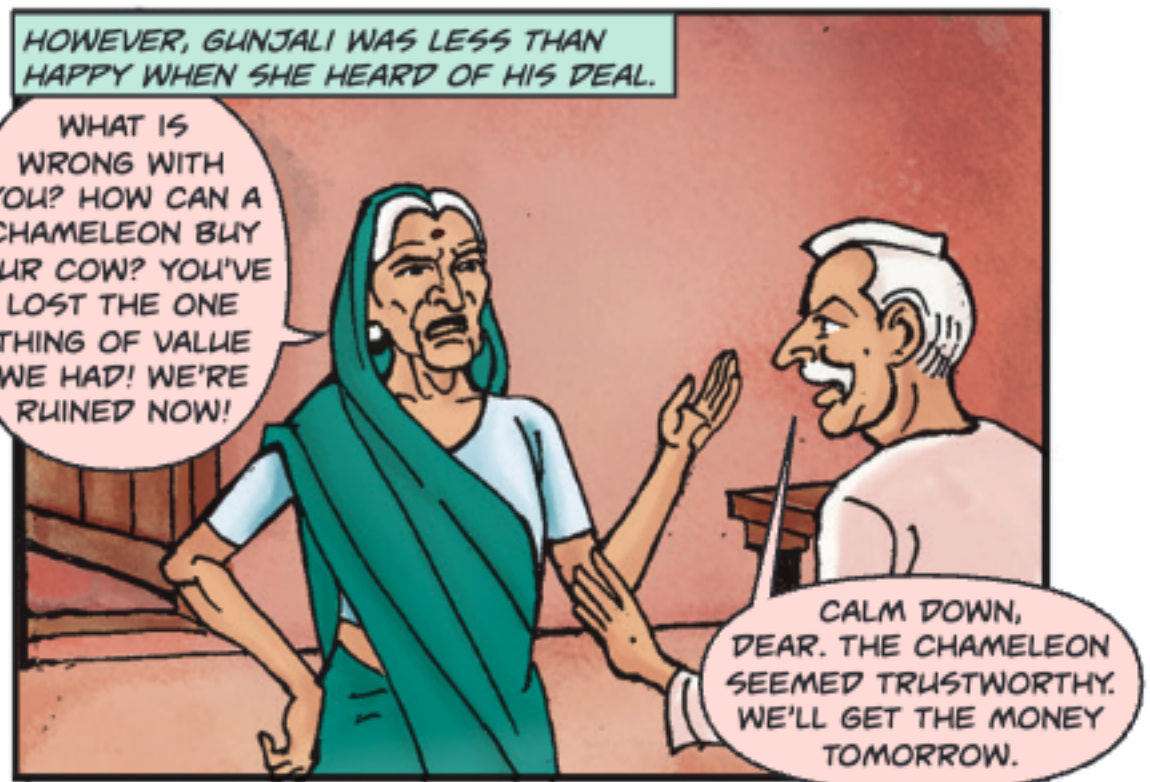
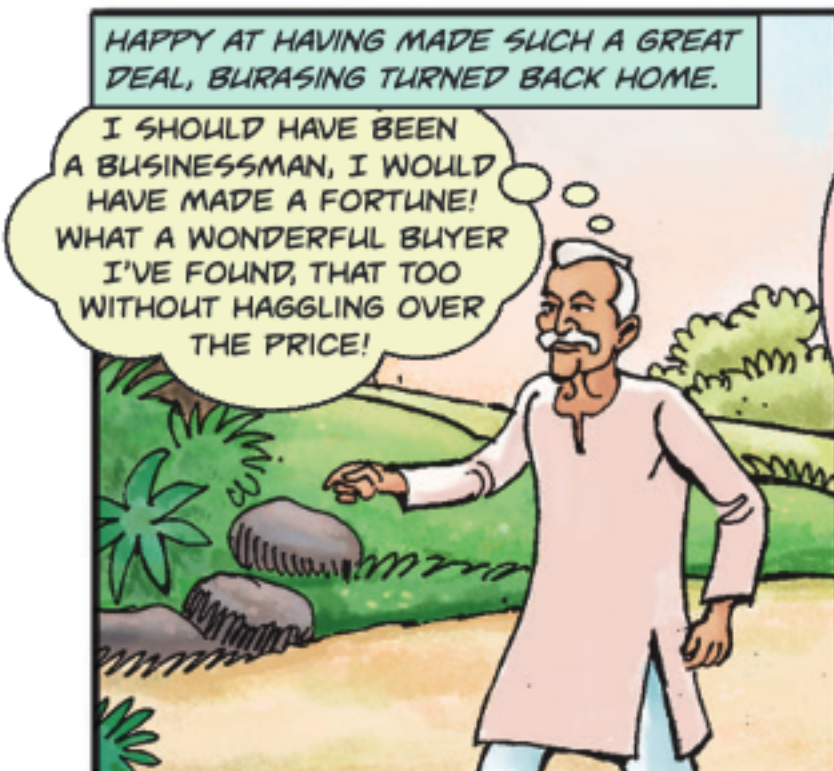
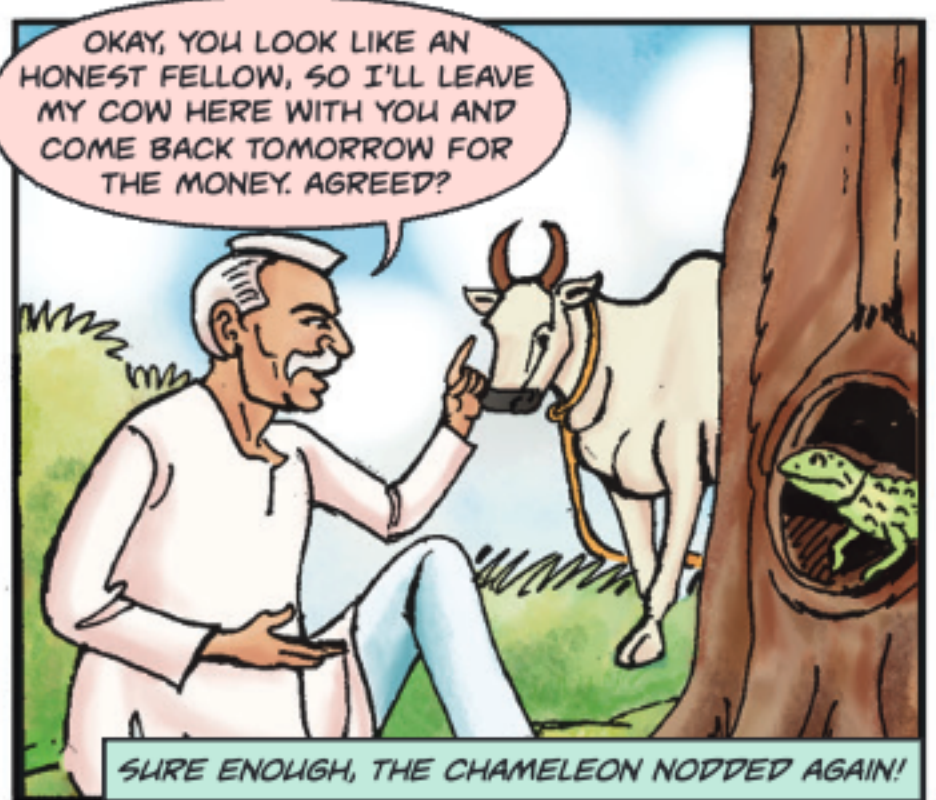
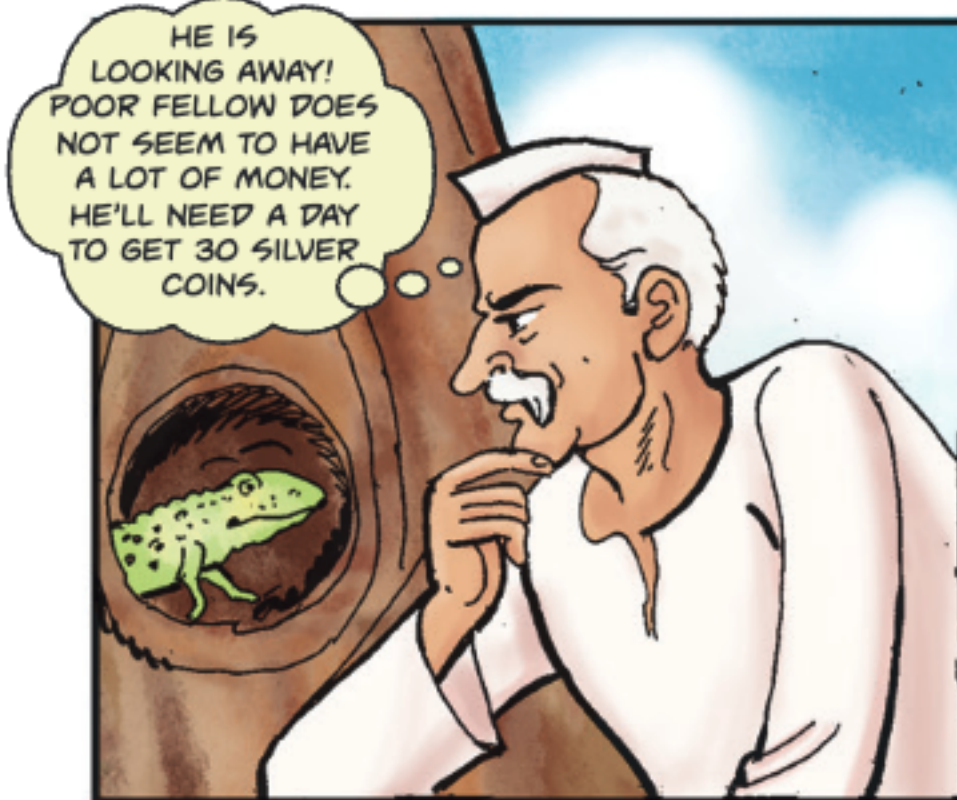
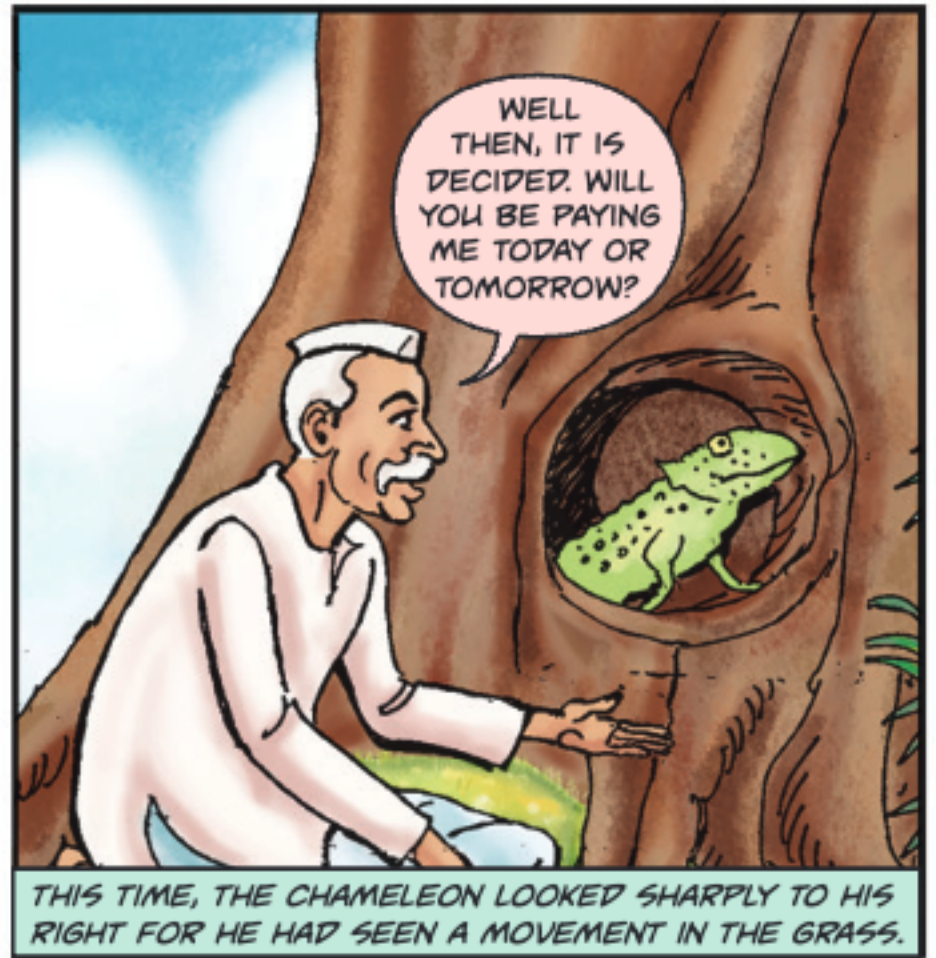
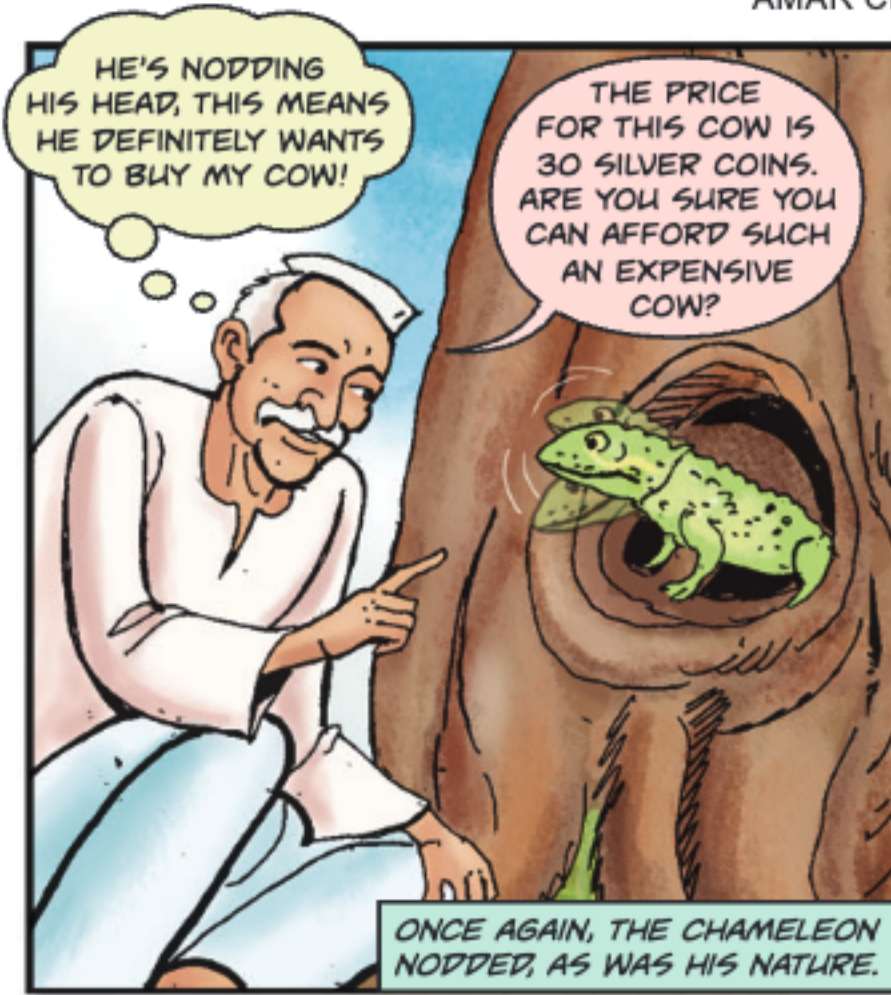


EARLY NEXT DAY, BURASING SET OUT TO FOR THE CATTLE FAIR. AFTER WALKING FOR A WHILE —

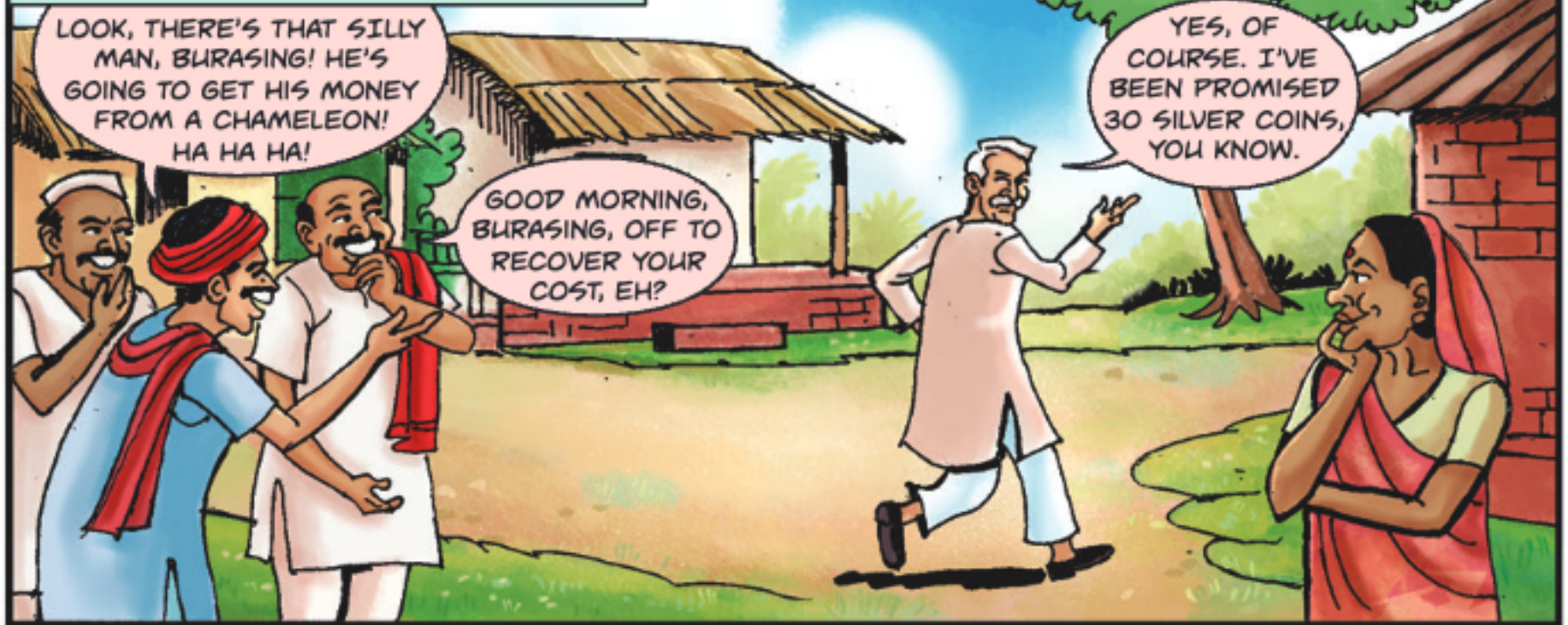


AS BURASING SETTLED DOWN FOR A NAP, HE SAW SOMETHING FROM THE CORNER OF HIS EYE.





BURASING'S BUSINESS DEAL BECAME THE TALK OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD. WHEN HE LEFT THE HOUSE THE NEXT DAY —



SOON, BURASING REACHED THE BIG TREE WHERE THE CHAMELEON LIVED.

HELLO, DEAR CHAMELEON, GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN. I'M HERE FOR MY 30 SILVER COINS. PLEASE GIVE THEM TO ME AND I SHALL BE ON MY WAY.



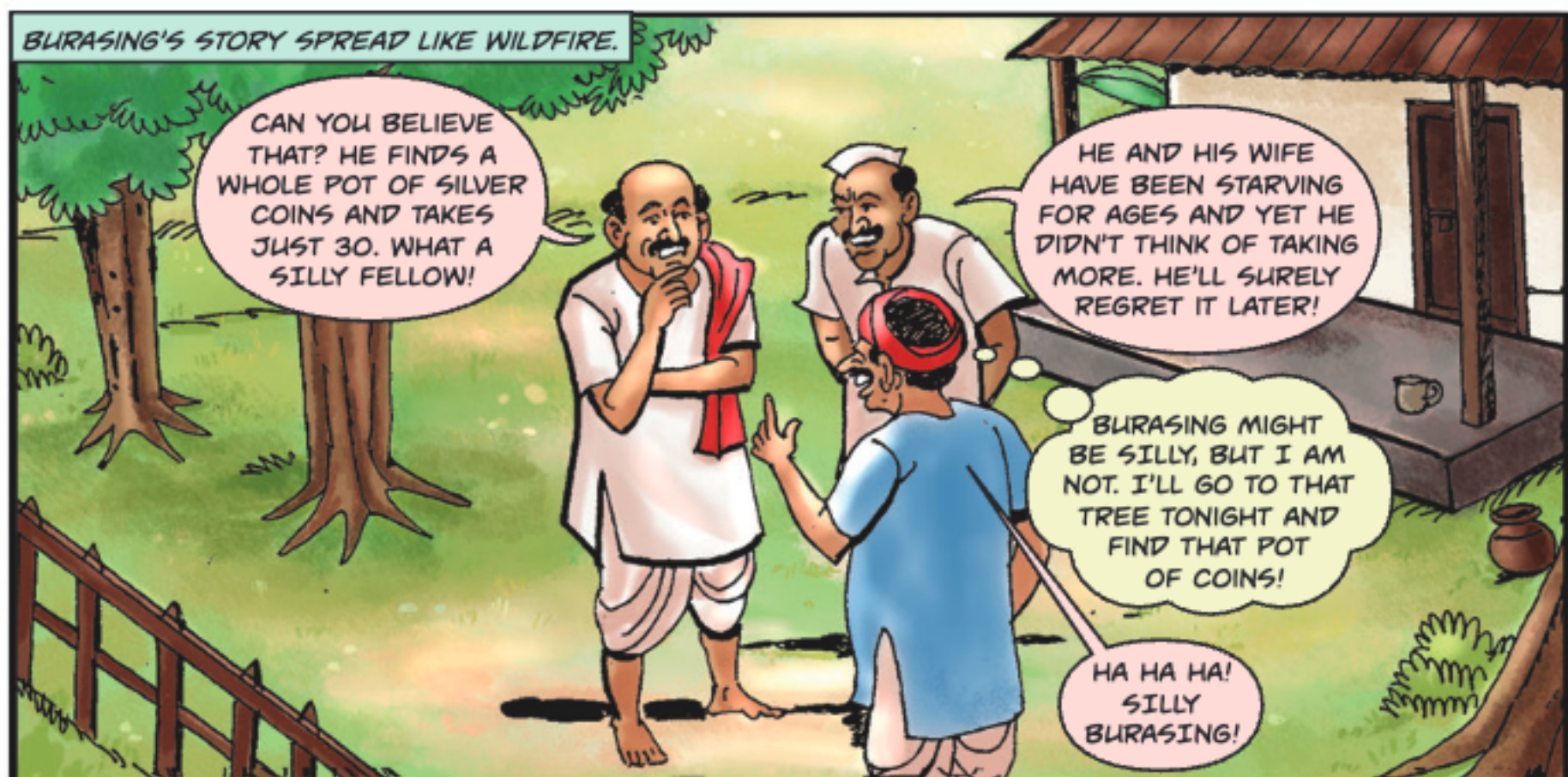
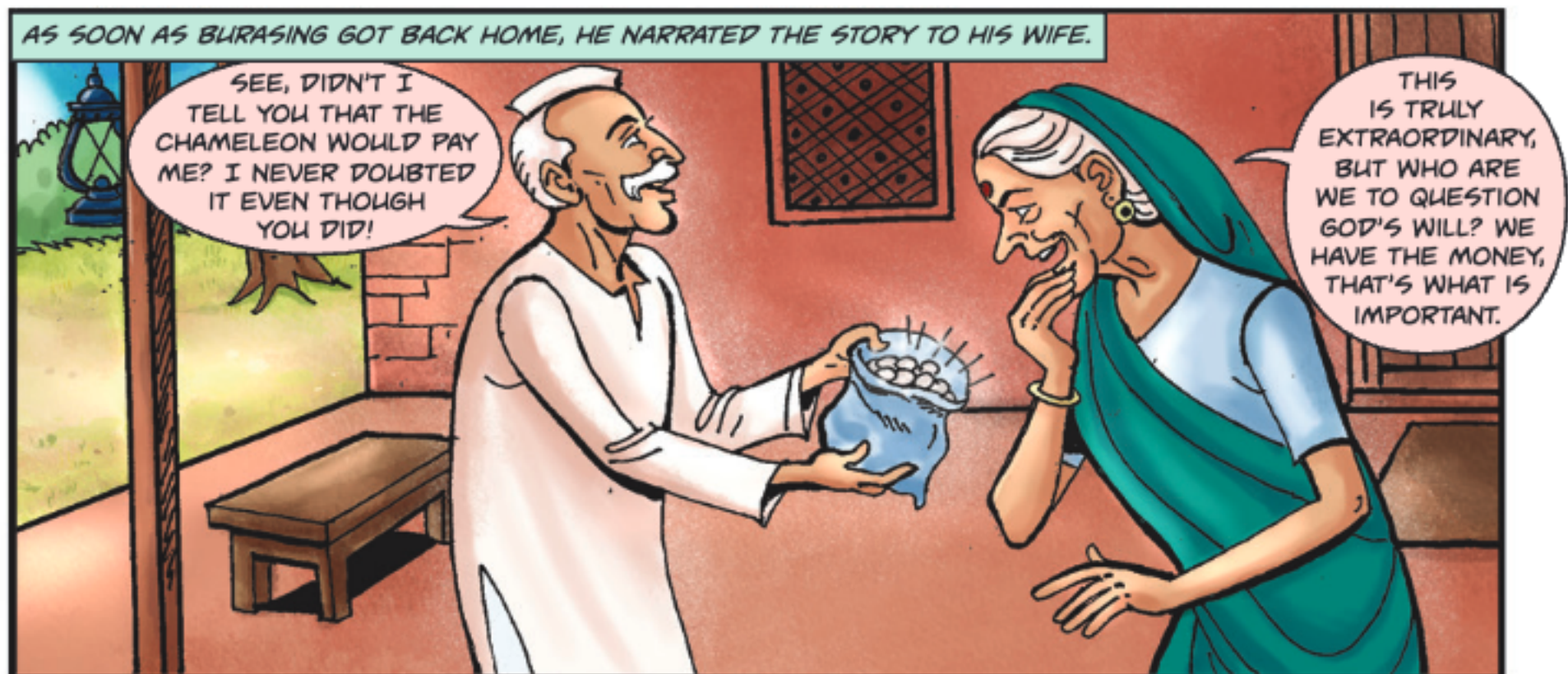
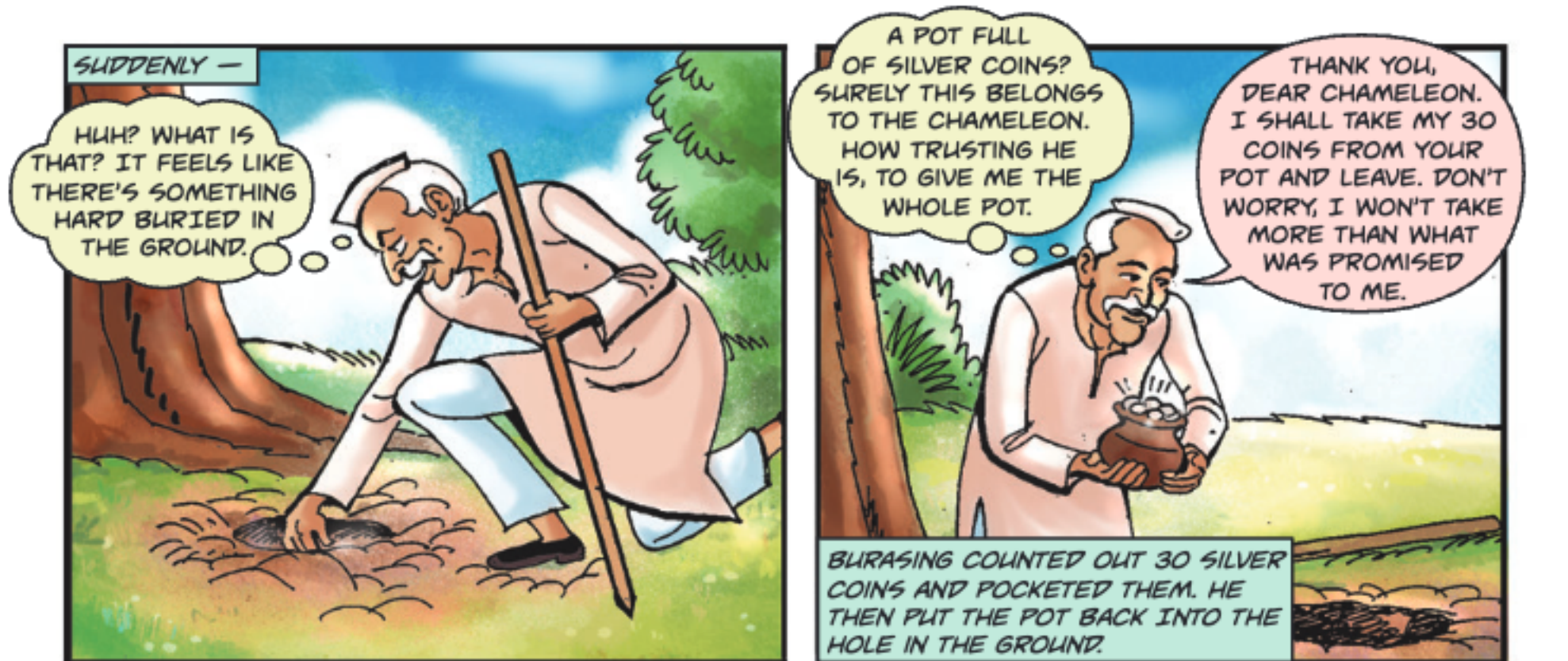
STARTLED BY BURASING'S HAND NEAR HIM, THE CHAMELEON QUICKLY RETREATED TO ITS HOME INSIDE THE TREE.

IT SEEMS THE CHAMELEON HAS GONE INSIDE TO GET MY MONEY. I KNOW HE IS AN HONEST FELLOW!



BURASING SPOTTED A STICK. BORED OF WAITING, HE ABSENT-MINDEDLY STARTED DIGGING THE EARTH AROUND THE TREE.





THAT NIGHT, BURASING'S NEIGHBOUR WENT TO THE TREE.



WHEN HE FINALLY DUG UP THE POT —



HE TOOK THE POT OF SCORPIONS, A PLAN FORMING IN HIS MIND.



SOON —

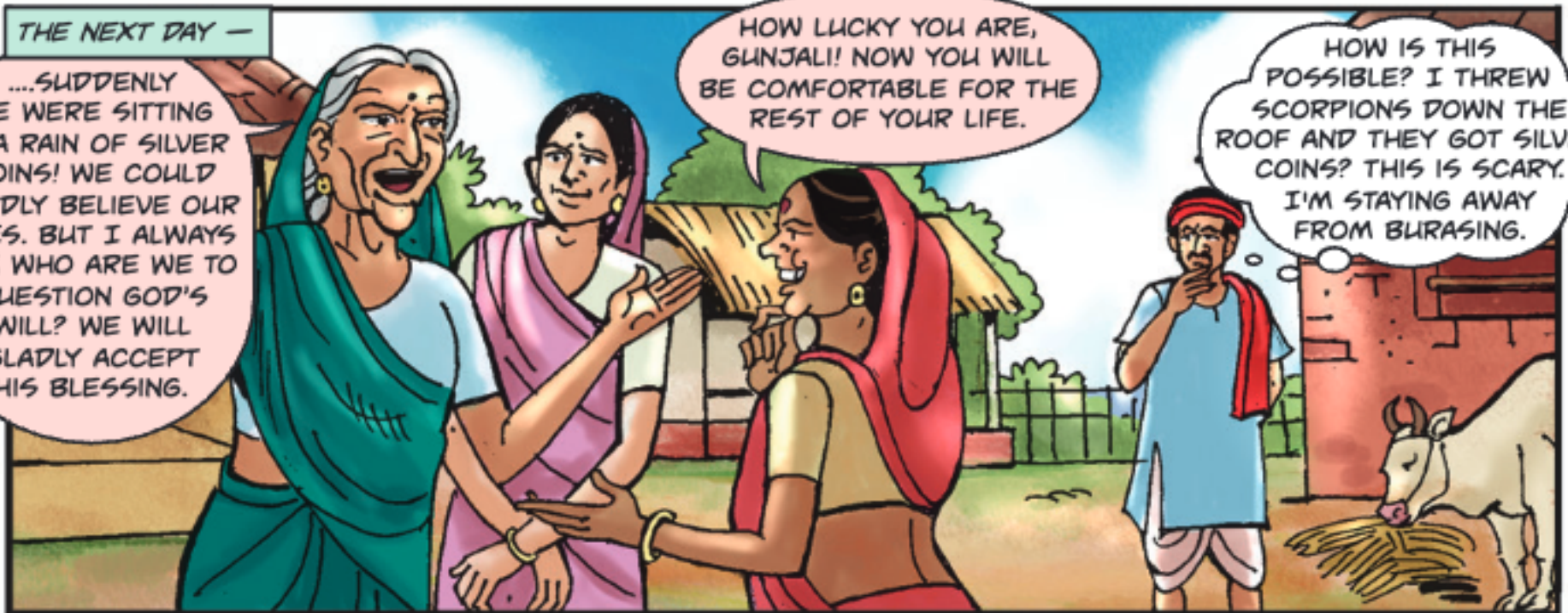


BURASING AND GUNJALI WERE AWOKEN BY SOMETHING FALLING FROM ABOVE.



THE NEXT DAY —

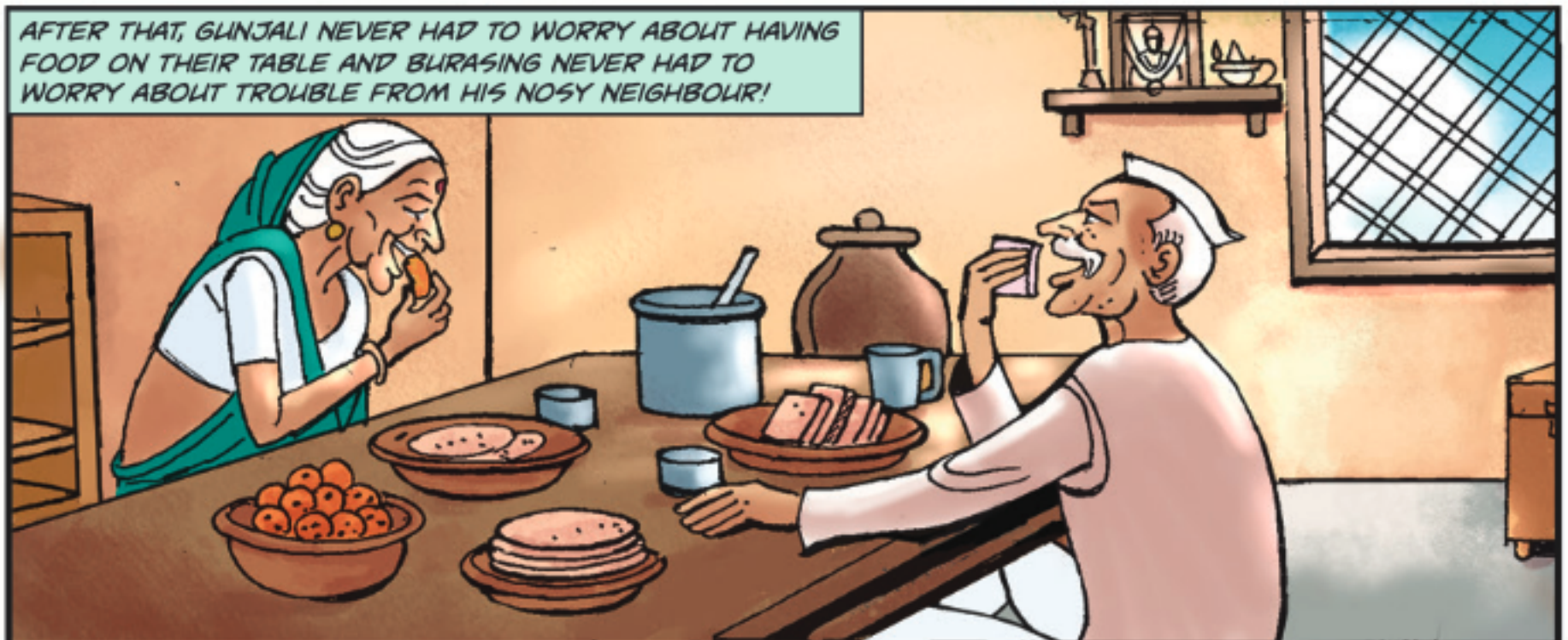
....SUDDENLY WE WERE SITTING IN A RAIN OF SILVER COINS! WE COULD HARDLY BELIEVE OUR EYES. BUT I ALWAYS SAY, WHO ARE WE TO QUESTION GOD'S WILL? WE WILL GLADLY ACCEPT HIS BLESSING.



HOW LUCKY YOU ARE, GUNJALI! NOW YOU WILL BE COMFORTABLE FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.

HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE? I THREW SCORPIONS DOWN THE ROOF AND THEY GOT SILVER COINS? THIS IS SCARY. I'M STAYING AWAY FROM BURASING.

AFTER THAT, GUNJALI NEVER HAD TO WORRY ABOUT HAVING FOOD ON THEIR TABLE AND BURASING NEVER HAD TO WORRY ABOUT TROUBLE FROM HIS NOSY NEIGHBOUR!



MORE CRABS FOR AATI

AATI AND MUKI WERE GOOD FRIENDS. ONE DAY —

MUKI,
REMEMBER HOW
MANY CRABS WE
CAUGHT ON THE BEACH
LAST SUNDAY? LET'S
GO CRABBING AGAIN
TOMORROW.

THAT
WILL BE FUN,
AATI!

YAY! I'LL GET
THE BIG BASKET
TOMORROW.

THE NEXT MORNING —

THAT
REALLY IS A
BIG BASKET.

I AM ALL
SET TO CATCH
LOTS OF CRABS
TODAY.

WHEN THEY REACHED THE ROCKY SHORES —

I SEE SOME
CRABS NEAR THAT
ROCK. COME, LET'S
GO THERE.



WOW! I
THINK THERE
ARE ENOUGH FOR
BOTH OF...



BEFORE MUKI COULD FINISH TALKING...

...AATI WAS OFF TO CATCH CRABS.

GOT
YOU!



AFTER A WHILE —

AATI, MY
BASKET IS FULL. I
HAVE ENOUGH CRABS
FOR TODAY'S
MEAL.

THAT'S
NOT A FULL
BASKET.









AAH!

NOOO!

OH NO!





NAHALI



Nahali is the name of a language that is spoken by the Nahal people in the Nandurbar district of Maharashtra. It is believed that Nahali was originally spoken by the residents of the **Toranmal village**. Over the years, people speaking different languages came and settled in Toranmal and learnt Nahali for trading purposes. The language was easy to learn and soon became widely used in the area, thus getting passed down generations. A **dialect of Nahali** is also spoken in **parts of Madhya Pradesh** including the **Dhar district and Madhavgarh**.

The Nahal people enjoy a rich and unique cultural life. **Kuladevatas** or clan-deities such as **Baba Hudol, Baal Saso, Baal Kumb, Billot Baba and Hiru Bai** are worshipped widely. A **special ceremony** called **Vaha** is also held in **honour of the kuladevatas**. This community ceremony, which takes place between December and January, is organised at night. People stay up the entire night, playing the dholki, singing folk songs, telling stories and performing poojas.

Sour vegetables and **maize flatbreads** are two of the most important dishes for the Nahal people. Traditionally, a staple meal of sour vegetables, maize flatbreads and a simple daal is prepared and taken along, by those working in the fields.

Games like **Dodi, Gilli-Danda, Chidhi Pat, Lagori, Khokho** and **Kabaddi** are very popular among children from this region. In an age where more and more kids use electronic devices for entertainment, the Nahal encourage their children to play sports and interact with nature.

The **Nahal** have a **rich and unique heritage**. With better access to education and technology, this community could thrive in the modern era.





THE INVISIBLE MONSTER

STORIES FROM NAHALI FOLKLORE

A water lily who befriends a buffalo. A fox who outwits a crocodile. A man who sells his cow to a chameleon. A father and son who encounter a monster. The stories from Nahali folklore are full of clever characters and magical places.

Nahali is the language spoken by the Nahal people of Nandurbar district in Maharashtra. Popularised by trade in the region, Nahali is widely spoken even in parts of Madhya Pradesh. Like in most other cultures, stories form an important part of the Nahali community and exemplify their unique and colourful lifestyle.

Amar Chitra Katha brings you The Invisible Monster, a collection of folktales from the Nahal people. These tales will make you laugh and also appreciate the rich lessons they teach, while offering a peek into the age-old oral tradition of this community.

